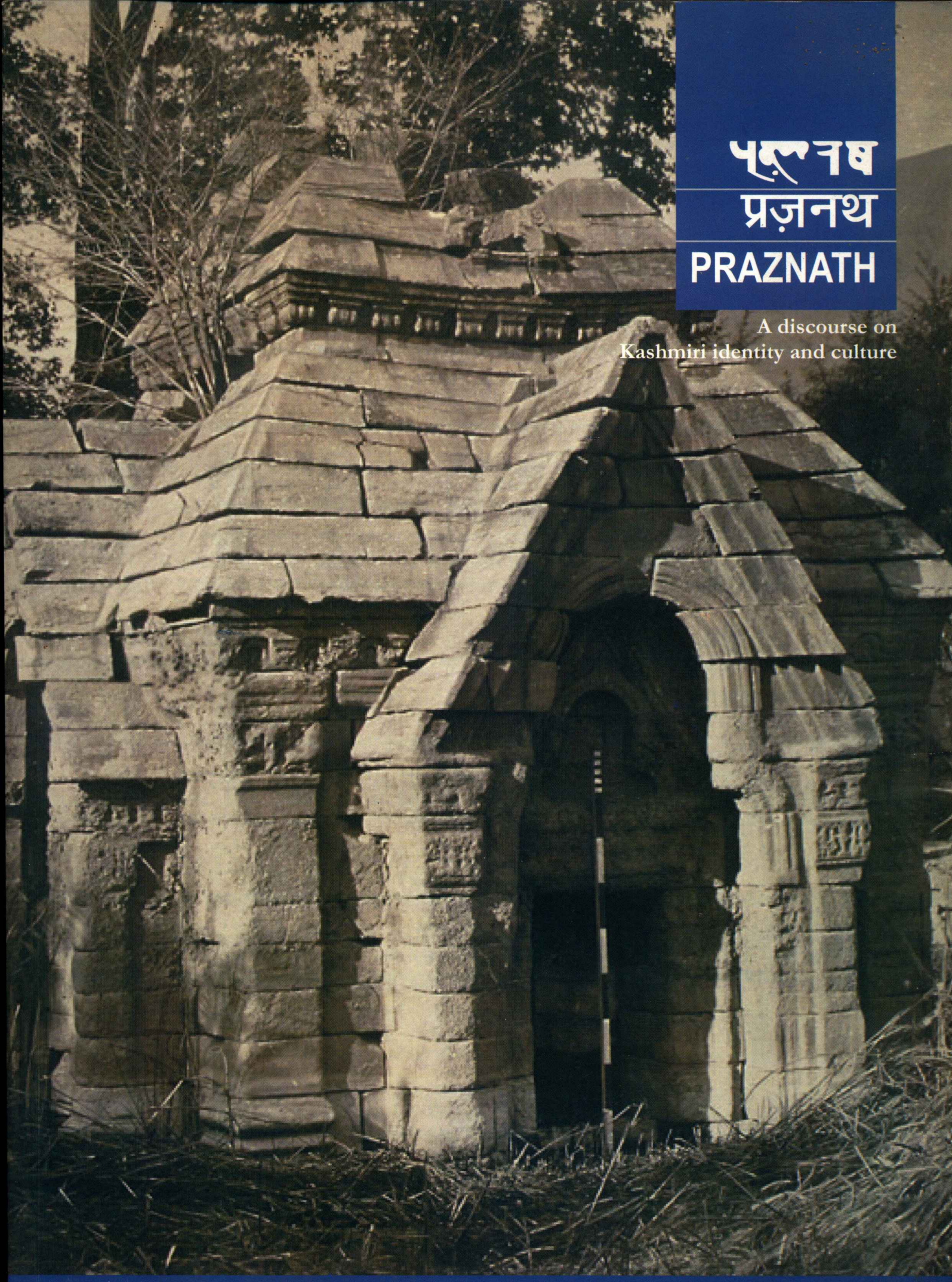

प्रज़नथ
PRAZNATH

A discourse on
Kashmiri identity and culture

Saptarishi Samvat 5086 (Magah Shukla Paksha - Chaitra Krishna Paksha)

Vol. 1 – No. 4 | January-March 2011

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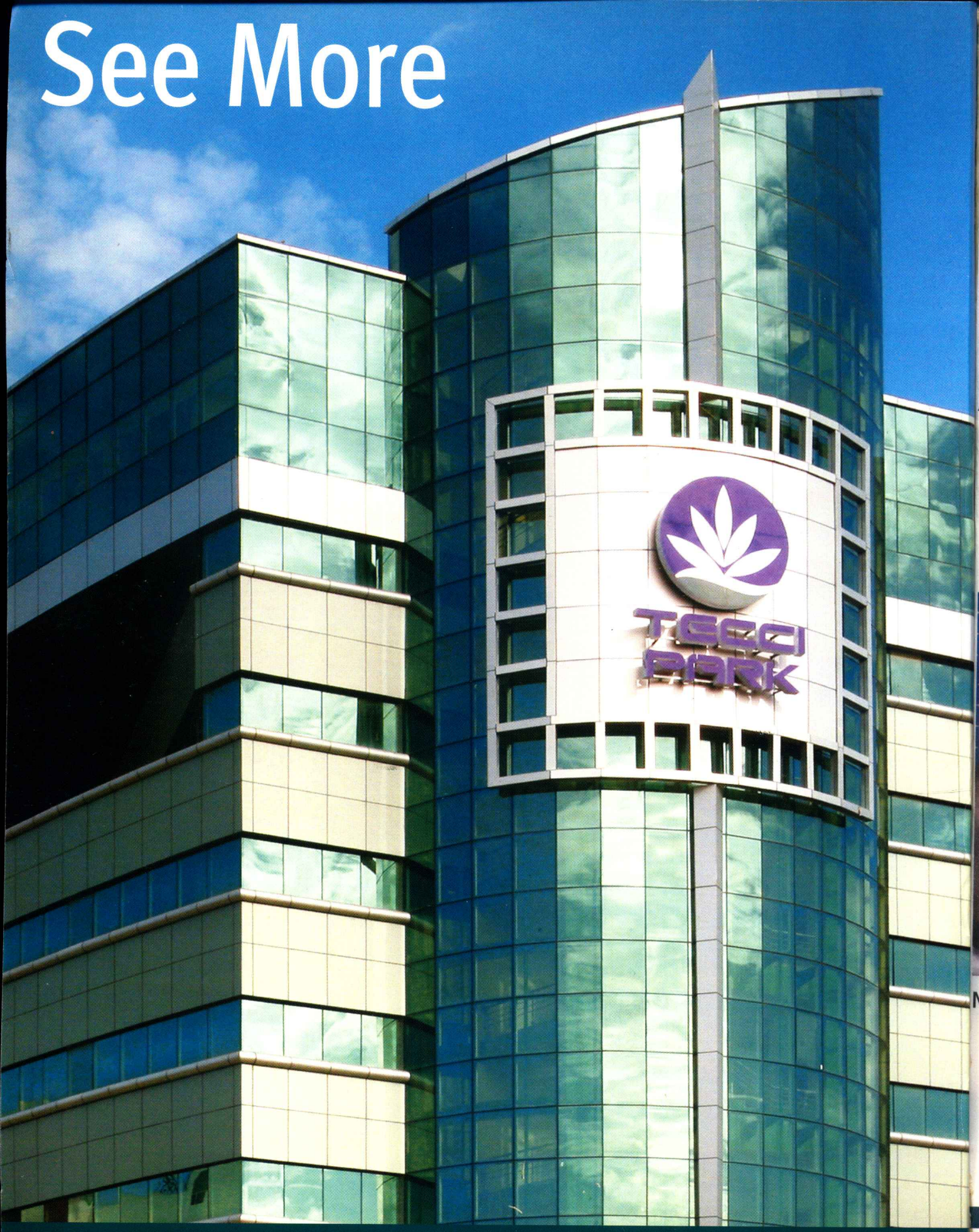

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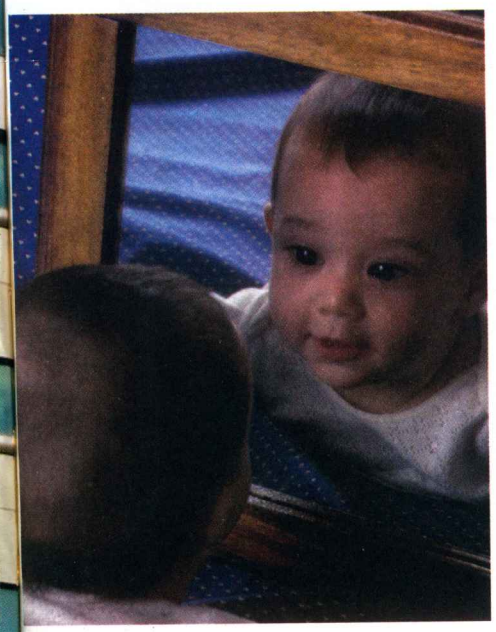

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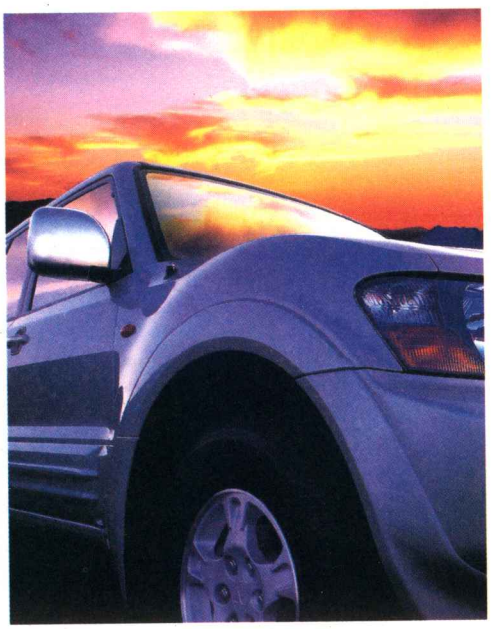

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PRAZNATH
January-March 2011
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THE PANDRETHAN TEMPLE: Located on the outskirts of Srinagar, the small but relatively well preserved temple at Pandrethan is one of the gems of Kashmir's ancient temple architecture. The temple was built probably in the 8th or 9th century. Despite its small dimensions, the temple is of great interest as it illustrates the basic architectural style identifiable in Kashmir. One cannot but be impressed by its "structural propriety, symmetry and restraint in ornamentation". The temple stands on a platform built in the centre of a tank, a frieze of carved elephants embellishing the base of the central shrine. The floor and walls of the interior are plain, but the door facets are embellished and the ceiling consisting of nine stone slabs arranged in courses of overlapping recessed squares is exquisitely carved showing flying Vidyadhara couples holding garlands in their hands. A full blown lotus of twelve petals is carved beautifully on the central square of the ceiling within a beaded circle. The pyramidal roof is divided into two tiers with the figure of a seated Lakulisha carved in high relief within the trefoil arch above the lintel of the doorway, indicating that the monument was most probably a Shiva temple. A Shivalinga has been installed recently inside the temple, probably by the Army.

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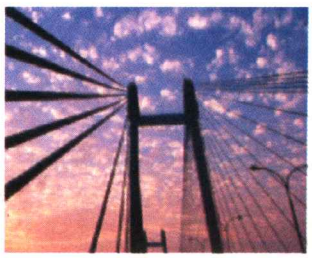

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Perspective

We are fully aware that we have lagged too far behind the normal time schedule in bringing out this, the fourth, issue of Praznath. For this we express our sincere regrets, pleading only that in bringing out publications of this kind it is sometimes extremely difficult to adhere to deadlines. We, however, feel somewhat satisfied that despite our many shortcomings we have, with passion as well as intention, continuously tried to unpack for our readers cultural realities of Kashmir history , as we had promised in the inaugural issue of the magazine, retrieving them from the tangled web of numerous myths and untruths constantly being woven to obscure them.

With the narratives about Kashmir heavily loaded with hegemonic suggestions seeking to erase all traces of the actual origins of Kashmiri cultural practices and traditions, we at Praznath are working hard to present the real story by pointing to the tracks that have been lost sight of. For this it is necessary to be armed with a mature understanding of the specifities of things cultural, instead of allowing oneself to be conditioned by versions of a vacuous tautology currently in fashion. Unfortunately, where deep insights are needed to go into core issues relating to culture and identity, vague and generalized rhetoric is used to evoke superficial sentiments. The dominant narrative of alienation uses all the romantic epithets to romanticise terror and subvert the discourse on identity by restricting it to hegemonic perspectives. Acting as a conscious conduit of cultural memory, Praznath intends to take this discourse out of these narrow confines and illumine a whole realm of indigenous creativity manifesting itself in life, literature, language, art and thought of Kashmir, that is being pushed into oblivion.

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To look at things from the vantage point of the past, this issue opens with an article that takes us to the centuries when the beauty and power of Sanskrit culture were regarded as almost synonymous with Kashmir. For about two millennia pre-modern Kashmir occupied a central place in what Sheldon Pollock calls the "Sanskrit cosmopolis", with its creative minds contributing brilliantly in shaping it and spreading it spatially from this valley and Purushpur (Peshawar) "in the foothills of the Western Himalayas to eastward to Champa (central Vietnam), Prambanan on the plains of coastal Java, and even beyond in the further islands of today's Indonesia, from the Kathmandu Valley in the north to the southernmost reaches of peninsular India...", to quote Pollock again. Entire Central Asia, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, Thailand and Cambodia were in its ambit. Participating in Sanskrit literary culture was, therefore, to participate in a vast world and it is no surprise that Sanskrit intellectuals of Kashmir, like their counterparts elsewhere in the country, were fascinated with its reach and power. Authored by the eminent scholar and ex-diplomat A. N. D. Haksar, the opening article titled Kashmir's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature surveys the whole sweep of the genres of Sanskrit literature which they enriched, making their auras of creativity glow before our eyes. The author also introduces us to the aesthetic thinking of amazingly brilliant theorists who developed almost all the foundational concepts of Sanskrit aesthetical thought and gave shape to the Indian literary theory. It may be noted that A. N. D. Haksar is also a translator of great repute of classic Sanskrit texts. Excellently rendered translations by him of three of Kshemendra's "caustic, brilliant satires of

everyday life" have been recently published by Penguin India under the title *Kshemandra: Three Satires from Ancient Kashmir.*

Kashmir is not just a geo-physical space but also the "geo-matrix of ideas and values, thoughts and concepts, embedded in the depths of the consciousness of its people, giving shape to their civilzational ethos". And the "deeper, inner core of this ethos belongs to paradigms evolved in the Himalayas, on the banks of rivers flowing through its valleys and ravines since times immemorial." This view is articulated by S. S. Toshkhani in his article *Kashmir's Cultural Affinities with Other Himalayan Regions.* To grasp their true meaning, he says, Kashmir's cultural expressions should be viewed in the perspective provided by the ecologies of which it forms a natural part. "Paradigms evolved in the stasis of vast expanses of sand" should not be "imposed on its Himalayan soul".

From Sanskrit and Himalayas a fast-fast forward to an absorbing account by internationally reputed scholar and scientist of Kashmiri origin, Subhash Kak, of his growing up years in towns of Kashmir Valley and Ladakh. Kak, who now lives in the US, shares with the readers of Praznath memories of his school-going days, touching upon in the process, quite unobtrusively though, the political events and other developments of the period, and at the same time providing intimate vignettes of Kashmiri Pandit family and social life. Some of these events, like Khrushchev's visit to Kashmir, the Chinese aggression, the turmoil caused by the loss of Prophet Mohammad's relic at Hazratbal, Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964 and the 1965 war with Pakistan, can be regarded as parts of a prelude to the present disturbed conditions in the Valley.

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In another piece of poignant prose that we carry in this issue, Sushil Pandit reminisces about his first hurtful encounter with history in his childhood days when he was vacationing at his maternal grandmother's house in Srinagar in the 1970's. Titled *Bhramrachōk*, this article takes us through the narrow, densely populated and dark streets, lanes and by-lanes of downtown Srinagar to a locality known as Alikadal where the house was located, commanding a superb view of the Jhelum riverfront. The author draws a vivid picture of the street life in the area that so fascinated him as a child, but in an unexpected turn tells us how on a walk one May morning with his mother through these very lanes he suddenly became aware of things historical about Kashmir – things that are generally swept beneath the carpet. Puzzled to see his mother bowing gingerly before a religious shrine – a *khanaqah* that forms a prominent landmark of Srinagar – and muttering something like a prayer, he was told by her in whispering tones that the shrine was originally a Kali temple. The image remained deeply embedded in the mind of the son, who learnt from historical texts years later what havoc the iconoclasts have wrought throughout the Valley, reducing most magnificent examples of Kashmir's temple architecture to rubble. That the mindset they represented is still active is reflected in the unfortunate circumstances prevailing in Kashmir today.

History again. Well known journalist and author Jawaharlal Kaul reveals for the first time on the pages of Praznath some unknown and untold facts about Pakistan's invasion of Kashmir in 1947. In his article '*Who Planned the 1947 Invasion of Kashmir*', he makes the startling disclosure that the invasion was "a joint British-Pak venture" planned in London, with Lord Mountbatten, Sir B. J. Glancy, the then Political Secretary of the British Government, Colonel Colvin, British Political (Intelligence) Agent in Kashmir and Sheikh Abdullah being the principle actors. He also calls into question the role of the British officers who commanded the Pakistani army. This gives an altogether new twist to what is euphemistically described as the "Kashmir issue".

Over the last two decades a large corpus of exile writing by Kashmiri Pandit writers in exile has come into being based on themes related to nostalgia, homelessness, loss of identity, dispossession, depression and alienation. Though the writings are of unequal standards and uneven literary merit, they have acquired an idiom of their own. We present in this issue a Kashmiri short story entitled *The Tree* written by late Hari Krishna Kaul (1934—2008) and excerpts of the novel *Under the Shadow of Militancy: Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri*, a novelette in English by Tej

Nath Dhar, as two finest examples of this new genre. We are carrying Hari Krishna Kaul's short story as a tribute to him, he being without doubt foremost among the writers who have shaped the modern Kashmiri short story. The story has been translated excellently into English by Arvind Gigoo, whose translations can in fact be better described as transcreations. We are greatly thankful to him for making the translation available to us. These two pieces of creative writing are followed by a critique of migrant or exile writing over the last twenty years by Siddhartha Gigoo, who has, however, not included his own recently published and widely acclaimed debut novel *The Garden of Solitude* in the list of the critiqued works. One cannot but agree with his view about the threat that "lack of patronage, marketing and promotion of this literature by patrons, publishers media, literary associations, intellectuals, scholars and academics" can pose to "creativity among the Kashmiri Pandits.

There is more in this issue of Praznath that the readers may find interesting and intellectually stimulating. Art scholar Geetika Kaw Kher, who is also the coordinating editor of the magazine and has been writing consistently for it, has made a foray this time into Kashmiri folklore. "Terribly fascinated" by the folktale of Akanandun, she trieds to decipher the meaning of the message it encodes and analyse its great appeal. The story, despite the presence of macabre elements in it has a powerful capacity to move hearts, explaining why Kashmiri Sufi poets have used it in their works to underscore the importance of their concept of *tawakkul* or complete surrender before God's wish. But what adds to the significance of the folktale is the fact of its being connected with the Indian traditions of folklore. This is illustrated by the part played in it by the Jogi as its central character. The Jogi or the ascetic renouncer, is a "remarkably pervasive and persistent" character appearing in Indian literature, folklore, ballads and oral epics, "spanning regions, language, centuries and genres", as Anne Grodzins Gold, reputed American anthropological scholar, puts it. The origins of this character are in the Nath stream within popular Hinduism that spread across large parts of North India and Bengal in the medieval period. What made the Jogis favourites of the masses is their trademark dress, their eccentricities of behaviour and the miraculous and magical powers they were supposed to possess. These powers, obtained by them because of their ascetic practices and spiritual ardour, included their capacity to bestow children upon infertile couples and bring the dead back to life -- and that is what we find the Jogi doing exactly in the Kashmiri folktale of *Akanandun*. Folklore, as Durga Bhagvat says, is "an amorphous element that gives culture its potential", and folktales like *Akanandun* should be seen in that light.

But what adds to the significance of the folktale is the fact of its being connected with the Indian traditions of folklore. This is illustrated by the part played in it by the Jogi as its central character. The Jogi or the ascetic renouncer, is a "remarkably pervasive and persistent" character appearing in Indian literature, folklore, ballads and oral epics.

The Indian literary theory, which combines the power of suggestivity of words with the emotive import of aesthetic experience to explain aesthetic response, is mainly the product of the thinking of two most brilliant aestheticians from Kashmir, Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta. In this issue, we have Niraj Kumar, with whose name readers of Praznath must be quite familiar by now as a scholar with a penchant for looking at things from unusual standpoints, trying to shed some new light on Anandavardhana's aesthetics. Describing Anandavardhana as a genius whose theory of *dhvani* or poetic suggestion "revolutionized aesthetic thinking in India", he delves deep into aspects that contribute to the significance of this theory. What adds to the value of Niraj Kumar's interpretations of the *dhvani* theory is his passion for research which makes him discover parallels between Anandavardhana's ideas and contemporary aesthetic thinking in Asian countries like China and Japan.

The Hindi section of Praznath continues to look very slender this time again, something which we would certainly like to strive to change in future. On the centre-spread this time we are presenting some paintings of the 19th century Kashmiri artist Pandit Totaram Naqash who lived in Lahore. He was one of the last great masters to represent the Kashmir school of miniature painting.

With this, we are happy to offer this issue to our readers with the hope that it will make a pleasant reading. Their feedback will be as usual most welcome.

Literature

Kashmir's Contribution to Sanskrit Literature

A.N.D.Haksar

Sanskrit is an all-India language. For centuries it was the country's link language, the vehicle of its higher learning and thought, the repository and transmitter of its culture, both within and outside, for example to East and Central Asia. All parts of this land have contributed to Sanskrit literature and no part can claim a special place in this regard. Even so, the contribution of Kashmir is quite remarkable, in quality and variety as well as in volume.

The beginnings of Sanskrit in Kashmir have yet to be dated. Kumarajiva, who translated many Buddhist works into Chinese in the 4th century AD, may have been from Kashmir, but this is far from certain. Perhaps the earliest written material we now have is the *purana* literature. The Nilamata, which is the *sthala purana* of Kashmir , is dated by scholars to about the 6th century AD or 1500 years ago. The *Vishnudharmottara Purana* originated in the region around Jammu around the same time.

The Nilamata begins with an interesting enquiry by the Pandava king Janamejaya as to why the rulers of Kashmir did not take part in the Kaurava-Pandava war. The Vishnudharmottara starts with a religious enquiry by king Vajra, the great-grandson of Krishana. Thus both are clearly later than the Mahabharata text. The third *purana* from Kashmir is the *Vasuki*, which mainly describes the prevalent Naga cult. It is considered about a century later than the other two.

These *puranic* texts are evidence that Sanskrit was already well-develeoped in Kashmir at the time they were written. Additional evidence is which was composed by Kashmiri scholars Jayaditya and Vamana about the 7th century AD. The Chinese traveler I-tsing noted its use by Chinese students of Sanskrit.

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Kashmir also contributed some other seminal early commentaries in Sanskrit literature. Take for example the *Charaka Samhita*, the earliest know work of Indian medicine. It now exists only in the revised version made by Dhridhabala in 8th century Kashmir. And the earliest existing work on the fine arts, after Bharata's *Natya Shaastra*, is the *Kavyalamkara* of Bhamaha, also from 8th century Kashmir.

These pioneering works give some idea of the age and importance of the Kashmiri contribution to Sanskrit

literature. On the whole, it can best be described under four broad categories: historical works; technical woeks; philosophic or religmous works; and general literature, mainly poetry of different types.

We may start with historical works. The first name this brings to mind is of course the *Rajataringini* of Kalhana. Written about 1150 AD, it is both a historical narrative and descriptive poetry of high quality. The first three of its eight books contain some important historical references, for example, Ashoka's patronage of Buddhism, the Kushana kings and the Huna invasion. But mainly they convey mythological information.

The remaining books cover about 500 years preceding Kalhana's own time. They provide a more factual record, an important source for the political, social and cultural history of Kashmir. Towards the end Kalhana mentions the aid sent from Kashmir to the Afghan Shahi king Trilochanapala who was facing the invasion of Hammira, identified by modern scholars with Mahmud Ghazni. However, the history is more concerned with internal deveIopments which are described vividly at length.

The modern fame of *Rajataringini* has overshadowed other historical works from Kashmir, both before and after it. Kalhana himself cites earlier historians like Kshemendra, Padmamihira and Chavillakara, whose work is known but now lost. And after Kalhana there were three continuations of his history: by Jonaraja who brought it forward by 300 years, including the introduction of Islam; by Srivara, who covered the reign of Sultan Zain-ul Abidin; and by Shuka who took it further up to the Mughal annexation of Kashmir.

Kashmiri scholars also wrote histories of areas other than their own. Billhana, whose work was known to Kalhana, went to South India, joined the court of the Chalukya king Vikramaditya in Kalyan in Karnataka, and wrote the history *Vikramankadeva Charita*. A hundred years later Jayanaka came to Ajmer and Delhi and wrote the *Prithvirajavijaya*, an account of the Chauhan dynasty upto Prithviraj's first, victormous battle with the Ghoris. These works also point of India in search of composed his epigrammatic collection, Shanti Shataka, in Bengal.

Turn now to technical works, first grammar. The two great grammarians of Sanskrit are Panini and Patanjali. The Kashmiri commentary on Panini has already been mentioned. Kashmir also contributed a famous commentary on the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali. This is the *Pradipa*, by the scholar Kayyata in the 12th century. According to legend he was a poor man from the small town of Pampur or Yechgam who eventiually migrated to Benaras where he wrote this commentary. About 400 years brfore him lived Chandragomin, propagator of the *Chandra Vyakarana* grammar which was current in Kashmir and also Tibet. However his provenance is uncertain.

The chief area of technical literature, where the Kashmiri contribution is predominant if not unique, is that of poetics,the study of literature as an art, and of the criteria of its merits and defects. This *Alamkara Shastra* has a vast corpus, and an abiding influence on literary tastes carried into the regional languages which grew out of Sanskrit.

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The first name after Bharata in this area is Bhamaha, to whom reference has already been made. After him, it would seem that, with the exception of Rajshekhar all exponents of Sanskrit poetics were from Kashmir. The list of these brilliant *acharyas* includes celebrated names like Vamana and Udbhata in the late 8th century, Anandavardhana in the 9th, Rudrata in the 10th, Kuntaka and Kshemendra in the 11th and Mammata in the 12th century AD. They are the progenitors of all the six major schools of poetics: *Alamkara, Riti, Rasa, Dhvani, Vakrokti* and *Auchitya*. Anandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or suggestion perhaps had the most lasting effect on taste, specially after the commentary of Abhinavagupta, another Kashmiri savant. It was further propagated by Mammata in his *Kavyaprakasha*,on which no less then 75 commentaries have been written subsequently in different parts of India, and which remains required reading for Sanskrit students to this day. In the field of religious and philosophical works, there is nothing from Kashmir to

compare with the great *bhashyas* on Vedanta which emerged elsewhere, from Shankara in 8th century Kerala to Baladeva in 18th century Bengal. One can mention in this context a minor Vedanta writer, Keshava Kashmiri, whose work *Vedanta Kaustubha Prabha* supports the *dvaitadvaita* system propounded by the Telugu saint-philosopher Nimbarka in the 13th century. More important in our context, however, are the thinkers who developed what is now knows as Kashmir Shaivism. The chief name here is Vasugupta, to whom, according to legend, the *Shivasutra* was revealed on Mount Mahadeva in the Harvan valley. He was followed by Somananda, author of *Shiva Drishti* in the 10th century, and his disciple Utpaladeva, who wrote the well-known *Ishvara-pratyabhijna*. The idealistic monism of this philosophy has retained a following in Kashmir and elsewhere till present times. Also significant is devotional poetry from Kashmir in Sanskrit – from Anandavardhana's *Devishataka* of the 9th century to Sahib Kaul's *Devinamavilasa* in the 17th century.

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Finally, a brief word about general Sanskrit literature from Kashmir. This covers poetry, long and short, plays, epigrams and narrative works. Texts or extracts of these are still viable, ranging over a thousand years from the 6th to the 16th centuries AD. Here we have space for just a few names.

Among works from Kashmir, perhaps the most popular to this day is the *Katha Saritsagara* by Somadeva. The name means an ocean of streams of stories. These, legend has it, were recounted to entertain a queen of Kashmir. More venerable is the work *Hayagrivavadha* by Mentha, dated to the 6th century. Kalhana says in his history that the king held it in such esteem that he had it kept on a plate of gold. No longer available, it is now known only through quotations. The other famous Kashmiri *kavya*s are *Haravijaya* by Ratnakara and *Kapphina Abhyudaya* by Shivasvamin, both of the rules of Panini's grammar, apart from recounting Ravana's battle with the king Sahasrarjuna; and *Shrikantha Charita* by Mankha from the 12th century, which also gives information about contemporary poets.

A unique work from Kashmir is the *Kuttanimata* by Damodaragupta, a novel in verse about the life of courtesans in the 9th century. A satire on the same theme is the *Samayamatrika* by Kshemendra, who was perhaps the most prolific writer in Sanskrit, we know from Kashmir, apart from some sharp satires on the corruption, works on poetics and prosody, and verse retellings of the great epics, as also of the Buddhist *jataka*s or birth-stories. In conclusion, one may mention two interesting works which reflect the cultural impact of the advent of Islam. One is the *Kathakautuka* by Shrivara the historian of the reign of Zain-ul-Abidin. This is a Sanskrit rendering of the Persian love story of Yusuf and Zuleikha, except that it ends with a local twist when the lovers are reunited by the grace of the great god Shiva. The other is *Delarama Kathasara* by Bhatta Ahladaka, about the love of a Muslim prince for a local courtesan.

This brief account will give a general overall picture of the inputs which Sanskrit literature received over the centuries from Kashmir. With the subsequent switch-over to Persian as the official language, and more recently to English, the extent of Sanskrit learning also receded in Kashmir as in other parts of the country. But it did not disappear entirely, and its continued presence was noted by foreign experts like Theodore Aufrecht and Aurel Stein who visited Kashmir just a hundred years ago. The flame has been kept alive in modern times by pundits like Jagaddhar Zadoo, Janakinath Kaul Kamal, and administrators like Pandit Parmanand. How brightly it will burn in the future depends upon the interest and the efforts of the prese generation. But, even if this is not forthcoming in sufficient measure, the rich contribution from Kashmir will always remain a valuable part of Sanskrit literature.

Adapted from a talk by Shri Kashmir Education, Oulture and Science Society New Delhi, on August 7, 2005 , by A.N.D.Haksar, former Ambassador of India and well-known translator of Sanskrit classics.

Culture

Kashmir's Cultural Affinities With Other Himalayan Regions

S. S. Toshkhani

Stretching from the Hindukush in the west to Myanmar in the east, the Himalayas are not a mere geo-physical phenomenon but the symbol of Indian civilizational ethos, the very soul and essence of India's spiritual and cultural traditions. The serene beauty of their eternal snows evokes a vision of the infinite and inspires a quest for the unknown. Their heights are the heights of the mind, their cosmic silence offering sublime moments of contemplation on the deeper and intrinsic meanings of life It is in the caves and caverns of the Himalayas and on the serene shores of the rivers and lakes having their sources in the mountain range or on its lofty peaks high as the strivings and aspirations of man that sages and seers have meditated to discover the deep mysteries of life and death – eternal truths that illuminate the mind with the immensity of the cosmic vision of the oneness of man, nature and the divine in the infinity of time. In the lap of this vast and scintillating mountain range were born the "human and humane" value-systems that stress the sanctity of life and of nature and have moulded and shaped the Indian psyche since the earliest times. Perhaps that is why Kalidasa calls Himalayas the very embodiment of divinity, the measuring rod of the oceanic depths of India's consciousness.

On the Silk Route

Indeed, it is impossible to imagine India without this great mountain system which generates the creative rhythm and harmony that marks the life style of the Indian people. That surely must be the reason why the great Shankaracharya chose to establish here the seats of the four Jagat Gurus in the places of pilgrimage as symbolic pillars of the directions supporting the spiritual unity of India. These bounding pillars are enclosed by the halo of what the ancient texts call Kashmir Mandala, completing the circle of a sacred geography towards which even today pilgrims from all directions walk. To experience the spiritual ecstasies awakened by the cultural ecologies of the enchanting vastness of the Himalayan landscape, there is perhaps no place better than Kashmir where

forests and meadows, rivers and lakes appear to be symbols of the intimate relationship between immanent realities and transcendence.

Located between the Pir Panchal and Karakorum ranges, Kashmir has the distinction of being the largest valley of the Himalayas, and has contributed in many ways, alongwith other Himalayan regions with which it shares millennia of human activity, to the pan-Indian cultural significance of the great mountain. Is it not surprising, therefore, that the Himalayan character of the Valley's culture has been consistently ignored and a forced amnesia created about it so as to de-contextualize it and deflect attention from actual facts of history. This is not to say that influences other than those that can be traced to the Himalayan civilizational and ecological ethos have not impacted the Kashmiri mind in any major way, but how far can encrustations and accretions be allowed to be seen as the real thing and the real thing hidden from sight.

The Swat Valley

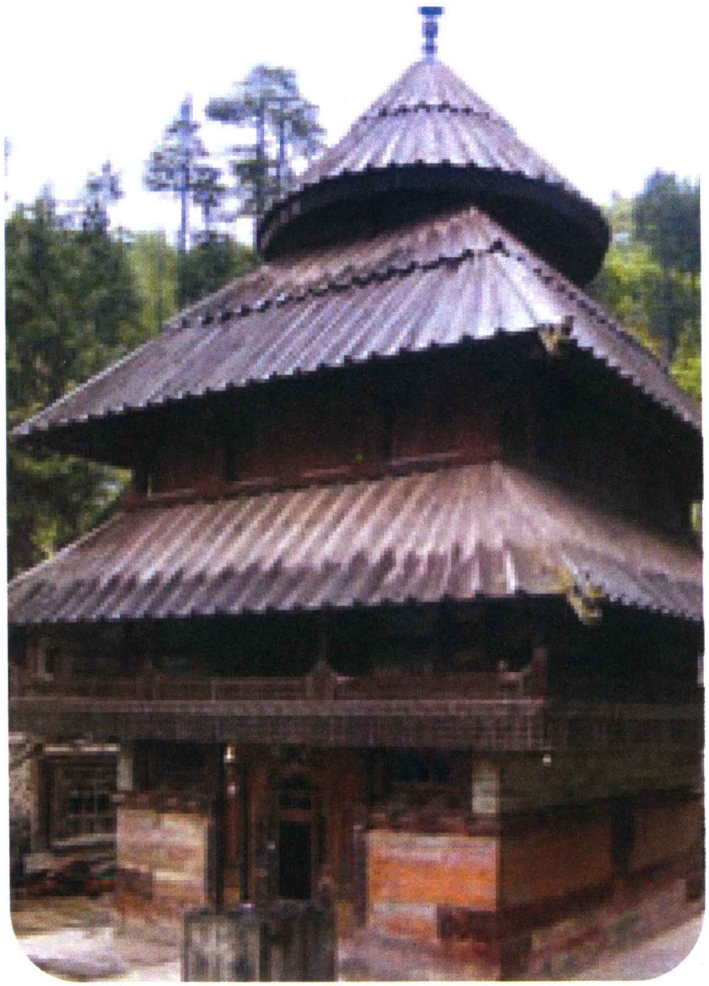
The vast Himalayan amphitheatre has witnessed a great drama of movement and migration and mixing and commingling of peoples in the early dawns of pre-history, leading to long processes of acculturation through which diverse ethnic groups evolved into distinct communities with their own peculiarities and characteristics and yet having many elements of commonality. Different cultural patterns and ways of living of the Himalayan communities emerged over the centuries from the peculiarly fascinating eco and geo-systems of the region, which at the same time displayed interesting strains of uniformity. Occupying a central place in this fascinating world of Himalayan culture, Kashmir has contributed immensely towards developing its unique traditions. The value systems, beliefs, rituals as well as art, architecture, folklore etc. shared by the people who inhabit it reflect a deep colouring of elements whose origins can be traced to Kashmir. As is well known, it came to be universally recognized as a centre of learning and culture, playing a crucial role, quite incommensurate with its geographical area, in creating the cultural climate in which Indian consciousness achieved its full efflorescence.

Historical factors and geographical location were largely responsible for promoting cross-regional exchanges and social interactions between Kashmir and other places situated along the Himalayas, which in turn led to its forging of highly significant linkages at different planes. For centuries this process went on, sometimes continuous and sometimes interrupted, sometimes intense and sometimes feeble, with far-reaching ramifications for art and culture, besides trade and commerce, in areas within the Indian watershed as well as across the Himalayas. Historical accounts are replete with references to political relations between Kashmir and ancient Gandhara, Kabul valley, Taxila and Swat in the north-west and also the erstwhile "hill states" of Punjab like Kangra, Chamba and Kullu, now known as Himachal Pradesh, not to speak of the hilly districts to the south of the Valley like Kashtwar, Bhadrawah, Poonch and Rajouri in the Middle Himalayas which are now a part of the Jammu and Kashmir state.

The fact is that the territories immediately adjoining the Kashmir Valley and located across the Peer Panchal range have played very important, sometimes even crucial, role in its political and cultural history. These include Kashtwar, Bhadravah, Poonch, Rajouri, Ballawar etc., references to which are replete in the chronicles of the Jammu and Kashmir state. Of these Kashtwar has remained practically the very backyard of the Valley, providing, as it has done, refuge on several occasions to its kings fleeing from political upheavals caused by attacks of ferocious invaders from outside. But more importantly it provides the key to many unknown or forgotten facts of Kashmir's cultural past. Kashtwari, the only recognized dialect of the Kashmiri language

holds many a secret of its origin and development. Bhadravah, known as "Little Kashmir" for its close resemblance to the landscape and climate of Kashmir, is also linked to it for several folk-religious beliefs and practices though politically it has been tributary to Chamba. Poonch has also been very closely linked with the Vitasta Valley, though more on the plane of political history. The same can be said more or less about Rajouri. Sadly, however, no serious attempts have been made to study what constituted the cultural network that binds these areas in an intimate relationship.

Ancient chroniclers often refer to the intimate political and cultural links that existed between Kashmir and the erstwhile states of Kangra, Chamba and Kullu which have at one point of time in history or other been tributary to Kashmir, the latter at times wielding even direct political authority over them, with matrimonial relations often helping to reinforce the ties. While no direct historical records of Kashmir's relations with what now comprises the Uttarakhand state are available, *bahis* maintained by the *Panda*s of Hardwar of their Kashmiri clients visiting them for obsequies of their deceased kin, provide very interesting material for study including names of several important historical personages. Some of the *bahi*s have images of the river Vitasta drawn on their dog-eared and fragile pages, personified as a goddess and shown mounted on a fish in accordance with the Kashmiri tradition. The Nilamata Purana, which gives the story of the emergence of the Kashmir valley from the waters of the primordial Satisar lake, says that Kashyap Rishi who drained away the water of the lake, was at Kankhal near Hardwar on a pilgrimage at the time people approached him with the request to deliver them from the devastation caused by the demon Jalodbhava. This is an important pointer to the earliness and closeness of the contact between the people of the two regions connected by religious legends going back to hoary times.



Temple of Tripurasundari in Kullu with Three-Tiered Roof

As can be gleaned from the Nilamata, Rajatarangini and other ancient texts, affinities between Kashmir and other Himalayan regions begin with ethnography itself with the prehistoric racial groups like the Aryans, Nagas, Pishachas, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Dardas, Khashas, Kiratas or people of the Tibeto-Burman stock etc. who occupied ancient Kashmir being the very people who were spread along the entire Himalayan belt on the Indian side. While the historical identity of Nagas who along with Pishachas are said to have been the original inhabitants of Kashmir, remains to be settled, ancient Sanskrit texts like the Mahabharata and the Puranas are replete with references to them, and so are the Buddhist Jatakas. These references indicate that they were actual people, and not mere mythical beings as some scholars take them to be, who wielded tremendous influence not only in northwestern India but almost in every part of the country down to Andhra Pradesh in the south. But, it is not clear whether with all their influence they actually ruled over any region or not, or whether there they belonged to a racial group other than and antagonistic to the Aryans. Were they a people without any alphabetic culture despite their civilizational progress for no language or literature has been attributed to them, or were they actually an Aryan tribe itself often at odds with the dominant group but at times having cordial relations with it? As for the Pishachas, Prakrit grammarians have referred to various varieties of the Paishachi Prakrit language and given some broad outlines of its peculiarities, but no work in Paishachi Prakrit has so far been traced, the much referred to Brihat Katha of

Gunadhya having been lost for ever according to the legend. The area in which various Paishachi dialects are said to have been spoken practically covers the whole of India, which is highly improbable. The Pishachas are also associated with cannibalism and forcible marriage practices which include elopement. Scholars like Morgiensterne and Grierson consider them to have been speakers of the Pashai language of Kafiristan. The Pishachas have been shown in the Nilamata as a highly violent and uncivilized tribe with the Nagas severely dreading the prospect of living in co-habitation with them in prehistoric Kashmir as the sage Kashypa had told them to. However, in Sanskrit texts like the Nilamata we see these ethnic groups mixing and commingling with each other with the passage of time to live in peace and harmony, the event finding its echoes ever in rituals and religious festivals.

The processes thus set into motion from the earliest times resulted in the formation of integrated societies with multi-layered cultural structures of which cultures of the individual integrating groups having their own distinctive characteristics formed different units. It may not be just possible for us today to identify any of these ethnic groups as definite entities, but the cultural footprints that they have left behind in the form of place names, festivals, rituals, modes of worship, music and dance, art forms, social mores, customs etc. can be traced to them without much difficulty. In the Kashmiri language the very word '*nāg*' denotes springs and waterholes as the aborigine Nagas were regarded as their presiding deities. In Himachal Pradesh too there are several springs with serpent deities besides numerous worship places associated with them. In Uttarakhand also temples and place names regarded as sacred to them are legion. Same is the case with place names associated with the Yakshas, who are called *Jakh*s in the Uttarakhand region and worshipped as divinities.

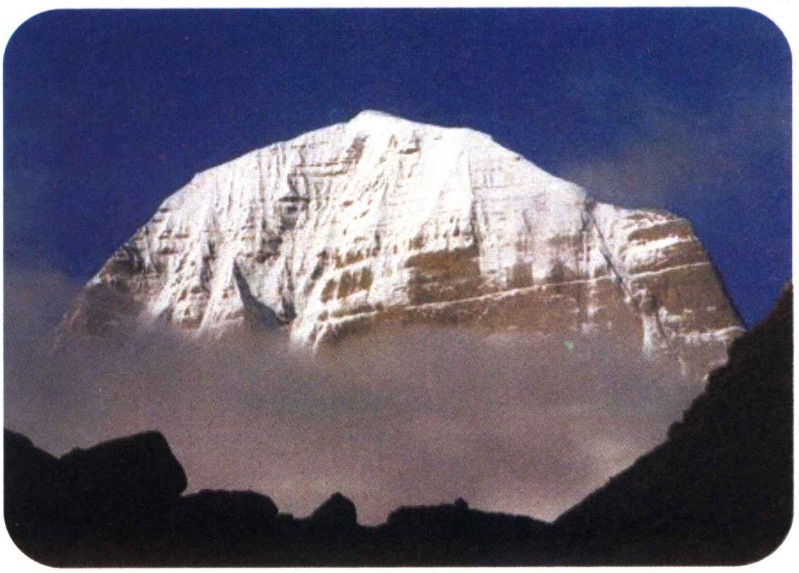
The Yakshas, immortalized by Kalidasa in his *Meghadoot,* constitute another dominant ethnic community of prehistoric times who had to be propitiated by the people of ancient Kashmir to keep them at bay, the ritual of offering *gadabatta* or fish and rice to them on the *Khetsimavas* day being a relic of such propitiatory traditions. Ananda Coomaraswamy regards Yakshas to be water or tree spirits as they are invariably associated with waterholes or trees. From their description in the Mahabharata and other ancient texts, the Kiratas do not seem to have belonged to an indigenous ethnic group but having possessed Mongolian features. These prehistoric cohabitants of the Himalayan eco-habitats faded into historical oblivion only after weaving strands of their beliefs and ways of life into the fascinating fabric that can be broadly described as Himalayan culture.

As an immense reservoir of concepts and ideas, knowledge and skills everyone was eager to draw upon it was natural for Kashmiris to have exerted a great influence on cultural as well as artistic plane on its neighbouring areas, more particularly those located along the Himalayan watershed. Thus it is that we find features of Kashmiri temple architecture and sculptural art marked by trifoliate arches, three-tiered roofs and triangular pediments crossed the geographic boundaries of the Valley and found their way into Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. As is well known, *Lotsava* Rin-chen bzang-po (950 – 1005 CE) took with himself 32 Kashmiri painters and craftsmen to Western Tibet to construct monasteries and paint murals on their walls at the behest of King Ye-shes-od of Guge. The amazing beauty of 10^{th}-11^{th} century Kashmiri style of pictorial art can be witnessed not only at Mangnang, Tholing and Tsaparang in the trans-Himalayan belt but also in places like Alchi in Ladakh and Tabo (Spiti) in Himachal Pradesh. Noted art historian Pratapaditya Pal regards the murals of Alchi no less important than the frescoes of Ajanta in the history of Indian art. Kashmiri artistic traditions were also carried into the Himalayan regions in the shape of bronze images and scroll paintings. Perched on the Karakorum heights in the north-eastern Himalayas, Ladakh, now a part of the Jammu and Kashmir state, had always been in

Trek to Gangabal in Kashmir

close contact with the Kashmir valley, politically but more prominently because of affinities provided by the Buddhist links. Kashmir's tremendous role in dissemination of Buddhism to Tibet, Central Asia, China and other countries in the Trans-Himalayan region right from the time of Ashoka and Kanishka is well known and well documented. Ladakh too, occupying the same geographical locus, could not but be a part of this vast communication network based on political, religious, cultural and commercial considerations, particularly from early medieval times to at least the 16th century during the medieval period.

A subsequent development took place in the 18th -19th centuries when fear of religious persecution and lure of greener pastures drove Kashmiri painters to places like Kangra, Chamba, Basohli and Guler. It was the artistic genius of master painters from Kashmir like Seu Raina, Nainsukh, Chajju Bhagat and others which gave birth to the classic Pahari School of miniature painting famous for its subtlety, artistic excellence and appeal. Even at the folk level the scroll paintings quite similar to the Kashmiri *goratray* can be seen in several places in Himachal Pradesh.



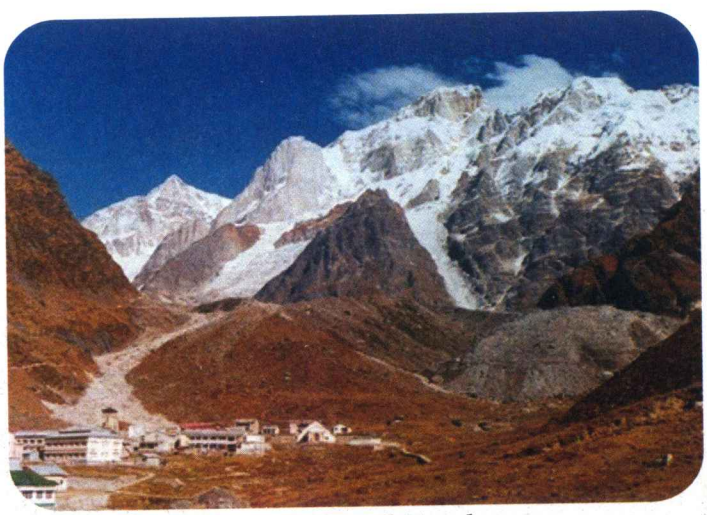
Kailash in Tibet

Sharada, one of the most important ancient scripts of India, which evolved in Kashmir probably earlier than the 8th-9th century and remained in use as a medium of written communication in an extensive area in the north-western parts of the country for a long period. It is also the mother of many other scripts like Takari and Gurumukhi and, according to several scholars, also of the Bodhi alphabet used for writing Tibetan. According to *Chos-byun* of Bu-ston and also the Ladakh Annals, Tibetan scholar Thonmi Sambhot was sent by King Srong-bcan-sgam-po to Kashmir in the 7th century to learn grammar and devise a script for the Tibetan language and Thonmi returned with a 31 letter alphabet based on Nagari and Sharada characters. Whether the Tibetan alphabet is actually derived from it in Thonmi's time or later, the Sharada script has been yet another important unifying element in the Himalayan cultural and civilzational history.

Shiva and his consort Parvati, besides the Buddha, have been the most beloved deities of the Himalayan people. In fact the benign presence of Shiva, whose abode is said to be on Kailasa on the Himalayan heights, together with his various manifestations, is all-pervading in the region which is also the source of some of the holiest of Indian rivers, including the Ganga which is believed to flow from his matted locks. In Kashmir, where the Ganga does not flow we have a number of holy rivers from Doodhganga to Kishenganga carrying its name Every inch of the mountain range from west to east, from Kailas to Amarnath is sacred to Shiva, abounding in places of pilgrimage reflecting his glory, with numerous peaks and crags, caves and caverns, rocks and cliffs resounding with legends associated with him, the God of gods. The same is case with Parvati, who is the great mountain's own daughter. The Nilamata Purana, a sixth century Sanskrit text which gives Kashmir's own creation myth, describes the whole Kashmir Valley as her very embodiment. Lake after lake, pond after pond, stream after stream, forest grove after forest grove, rock after rock, and peak after peak tells the poignant story of her love for the land. Parvati is said to have incarnated herself as the river Vitasta, the beloved river of the Kashmiris whose birthday they celebrated till not too distant a past by floating earthen lamps on its gentle waves. On the grassy slopes of the beautiful meadow Yusmarg she is said to have roamed as *yoshita* or a young girl, lending her name to the place (wrongly supposed to have been named after Yusuf Shah Chak who ruled over Kashmir before Akbar made it a part of his Mughal empire). At the level of folk religion, many hilly goddesses, like Sharika and Ragnya in Kashmir and Nanda Devi and numerous other local goddesses in other parts of the region, have been identified with her. At a higher mystic and esoteric plane, this has led to

proliferation of cults associated with Shaiva and Shakta and also Buddhist Tantrism (of the Mahayana, Mantrayana and Vajrayana variety). Tantra then has been the abiding belief system deeply entrenched in the entire region from Kashmir down to Kamaroop -- the devotional and ritualistic constant of the faith that receives its values from Kashmir Shaiva metaphysics or doctrines of Mahayana. The immense popularity of the Bhairava or Mother Goddess cults at the level of folk religious beliefs and practices shows how strong these traditions have been and still are.

In fact, folk-religious influences, like folklore, have manifested itself in numerous forms to become an important part in the religious life of the communities of the entire region, interacting with other cultural currents from literature to rituals. Winning the favour of folk deities for power and prosperity, fertility and health through rituals form the core of religion for ordinary masses everywhere, leading to their intervention and involvement in day to day life of their worshippers. Associated with seasons and agricultural cycles, festivals and folk religious practices of the region have features closely related to the identity of the social milieus in which they are performed, often full of music and dance to intensify elements of ecstasy and devotion. As in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh, so in Uttarakand and other regions of the Indian Himalayas, folk religion forms a lively aspect of the structure of religious consciousness of the people. While the folk deities are approached for prosperity and happiness, they are expected to respond with compassion as well as magical power to fulfill the devotees' worldly desires. We have referred to the cults of the Bhairava and the mother goddess above as a common element in various folk religious modes of worship, there is also a whole pantheon of demonology present in each of these modes which is sought to be appeased through various mystical and magical practices. .



Shri Kedarnath Temple

Language is yet another field that opens up a whole horizon of affinities between the languages of the Himalayan regions evolved from and pulsating with the beauty and vitality of Sanskrit, the embodiment of Indian thought and culture. Linguists have drawn attention to the importance of studying Kashmiri for understanding the evolution of modern Indian languages from their Old Indo-Aryan origins over the centuries as well as their present relations. The dynamics of creating vocabularies that the Himalayan languages share as a legacy from Sanskrit is revealed not only by the word-stock that they draw upon but also by the structural matrix explaining their formative processes. The secret of affinities between these languages in their present form lie in their connection with the Sanskrit traditions that have given them their shape from their etymologies to their morphologies. The *chh*-based auxiliary verb forms of Kashmiri, for instance, derived from the Sanskrit root *kshi,* are quite similar to the corresponding auxiliary verb forms in Kumanoni and other Uttarakhand dialects. The similarities, of which a whole world opens up in lexicographical items as well as their "semantic spectra", to borrow a phrase from Dr. Lokesh Chandra, could make a very interesting study, even though Sanskrit is in near total eclipse in today's Kashmir

Architecture and artistic skills are also features having a wide impact on the life styles of large segments of population in these areas could well form the subject of a very rewarding study. Close resemblance between the traditional residential architecture of Kashmir with its carved wooden bay windows and eaves, columns and beams, doors and latticed window panes and the traditional houses in different parts of Himachal Pradesh is something that cannot be missed by the discerning eye. Equally interesting are the elements that link the life-patterns of nomadic communities like the Gujjars and Bakarwals of Jammu and Kashmir and the Gaddis of Himachal Pradesh besides several other small tribal and pastoral societies who have their own sub-cultures which they have managed to sustain even in most adverse political conditions.

The unique thing about the Himalayan regions, it will be interesting to note, is the role played by eco-systems in shaping human ideas and fostering cultural expressions. The rivers flowing through the entire belt have divided the mountain ranges into their catchment areas, providing the most essential life sustaining element water

for human habitations to flourish. Scientists are rightfully describing these Himalayan ranges as "water towers of modern civilizations". Along with water and snow forests, form an important feature of Himalayan identity, supporting a vast diversity in the biosphere. It is because of the forests that we have life patterns associated with cattle rearing, food -gathering, cottage industries, trade, medicinal herbs, farming; it is because of them that we have songs and music and dance and even spiritual contemplation and philosophy in these regions. The diversity is there, but the unity is also palpable, for there is something in the nature and behaviour of the Himalayan people that comes straight from the ecology of their habitat.

The "deeper, inner core" of Kashmiri ethos belongs to paradigms that have evolved in the Himalayas, on the banks of the rivers flowing through its valleys and ravines since the dawn of civilization. The perennial flow of their waters "gave rise to the centrality of flow, movement and progress in thought", to quote Dr. Lokesh Chandra again. "Banks of rivers with water flowing became the inspiration for the spontaneity of regulation from within, the basis of value systems of *samskara*." For those, therefore who want to access this core, it will be a futile exercise to look for it in the paradigms that have evolved in the stasis of vast expanses of desert sand and imposed on its Himalayan soul. Kashmir's indigenous cultural expressions have been inspired by pine and deodar scented breezes and the music of murmuring rivers winding their way through its length and breadth. Their true meaning can be grasped only when viewed in a perspective provided by the ecologies of which it forms a natural part.

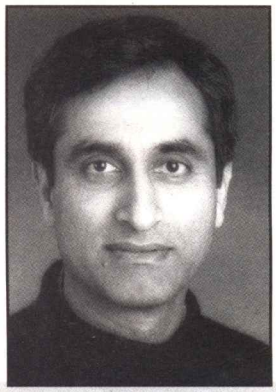
A Folio from the Bhagwad Gita in the Sharada Script

It will be rewarding for researchers, therefore, to give up burrowing holes through heaps of historical falsehoods in the belief that they are excavating facts about Kashmir and its culture and look for the thread that binds Kashmiris together in unity with the people of the other regions of the Himalayas. Such an inquiry shall have is own thrills and excitements for it shall open up for them breathtakingly interesting vistas of social customs, religious traditions, ritualistic behaviour, costumes, life styles, folklore, art and various other forms of creative expression besides the linguistic situation and other spheres of everyday life. .Those who bring up Central Asia and its Sufis every time Kashmir's culture is mentioned should know that the Silk Route was more a route of the Sutras introduced, translated and interpreted mostly by scholars and monks from Kashmir, that Kashmiris were everywhere in Central Asia in the first millennia of the Christian era, that Kumarajiva, son of a Kashmiri Brahmin and Kuchean princess was the greatest scholar the region has ever produced, taking as he did the Lotus Sutra to the farthest end of the Far East – being called one of the "four suns' of Buddhism for that – and that Kashghar was known as Kashi for being a centre of Sanskrit learning, which Khotan too had become till it fell to the Karkhanavids in 1006. It were the Mahayana and Vajrayana monks from Kashmir who tamed the fierce tribes of the area by transmitting the holistic message of the Buddha and taught them the Sutras. And not just Buddhism, Kashmiri scholars introduced the Sanskrit language and Sanskrit wisdom throughout the trans-Himalayan belt and Kashmiri artists painted frescoes there in places like Dun Huang, bringing the art of Ajanta to the region. Travellers traveling along the Silk Route would carry with them bronze images of Avalokiteshwara beautifully carved in Kashmir as the deity of protection.

The case for viewing Kashmir in the perspective of Himalayan culture is indeed very strong. Unfortunately, this remains a totally neglected research area even though venturing into it can lead us to amazing facts about Kashmir's indigenous belief systems, religious expressions, life-patterns and ritualistic behaviour, philosophy, traditional arts and artistic skills, language and literary traditions, folklore, folk-religious beliefs and practices including demonology and animistic and pantheistic worship, oral and intangible heritage, eco-cultural systems and social structure..

[This paper was presented at a seminar organised by SSEASR at Thimphu, Bhutan on June 30 - July 3, 2011.]

Remniscences



Growing Up in Kashmir

Subhash Kak

[We had received from the noted scholar - scientist three autobiographical pieces for publication, which we are presenting here all at one place under one title. Apart from their biographical value, these pieces touch upon some important socio-political events that took place in Kashmir from mid-1950's through the 1960's.]

Kulgam to Leh

My father was posted in Udhampur when I started school. His job involved transfer to a new place every two years or so and he was next sent to Kulgam, a small town in South Kashmir, in 1954. We lived there on the second floor of a house on the main street. Behind our house was a little stream from where we sometimes fetched water for washing dishes. I don't think that we had a running water tap in the kitchen. An attendant arrived with pitchers of waters for cooking and drinking in the morning.

What is now left of the Kula Vageshwari Temple

We ran errands for mother to get her grocery items from the shops in the street. On Sundays, in summer, we went to the ancient temple of Kula Vageshwari from which the town gets its name. The temple was at the site of a spring which opened into a stone-lined tank where the worshipers bathed.

Kulgam is on the river Veshav, from Vishoka, that begins at the lake Konsarnag in the mountains. This lake is supposed to mark the foot of Vishnu and so it is also called Vishnupad. The mountain-peak at the foot of which the lake lies is where according to legend Vishnu in his fish-avatara moored a boat (or did *naubandhana*).

I don't remember much about the school in Kulgam. This place was very different from Udhampur culturally. Some children from villages around Kulgam had bad cases of ringworms, and we had to be careful so as not to catch the infection.

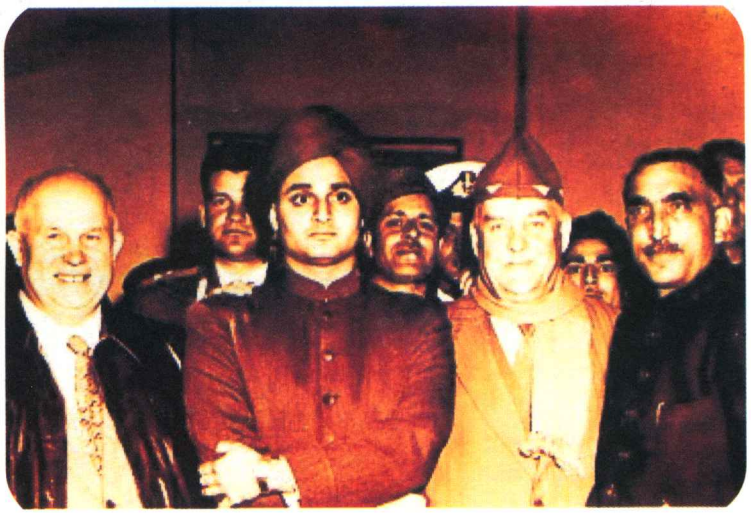
The younger children were bullied by the older ones using head butts. We had three months of vacations in winter and these days were spent mainly indoors reading or listening to the conversation of our parents' friends on social visits. As at other places in Kashmir, the houses were not insulated and in the bitter cold of the winter we would remain huddled in blankets with *kangri*s.

From time to time we would go to Srinagar and spend a few days at the ancestral house at Sathu where Bayaji

(father's uncle, who had raised him) lived. This place had a treasure trove of books in an old trunk that I raided from time to time. One of the earliest books I remember reading was *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.*

I was in Srinagar, watching the motorcade drive by the Dal Lake, when Khrushchev was welcomed warmly there by Nehru in December 1955. Although Sheikh Abdullah, remained jailed, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed, his replacement as prime minister, had built up a vast network of supporters based on patronage and he could get them to come out to demonstrate for whatever he wanted. Kashmiris were emerging from extreme poverty, a consequence of the epidemic 70 years earlier in which three-fifths of the population had perished, the depression of the thirties, and the general impoverishment of India after the Industrial Revolution in Europe without a corresponding industrialization of India.

Kashmir was also undergoing enormous social change. The land had been taken from the landlords – without compensation -- and given to the cultivators. The government bureaucracy had increased multi-fold and this brought a measure of security for the first time to those families who had government jobs.



Khrushchev in Srinagar

When Avinash, who had spent a year studying in Kapurthala while living with our uncle, returned home, we found he had become very self-assured. He was doing long distance running, something quite novel for a boy in Kashmir either played a competitive sport or walked; running was considered bad for the knees and if it wasn't essential, it was not the thing to be done. He also expressed strong moral principles that I had not given thought to myself, such as he wouldn't eat the chicken from our own backyard since he had contributed to raising it.

In Kulgam I came down with a severe case of typhoid. I was bedridden for more than a month, and at the end of it I was so weak that I could not stand up and I had to relearn how to walk. It was decided that to speed up my convalescence mother would make me an egg that I would eat in the kitchen. One day, when I was near the fireplace on the floor of the kitchen, I fainted; my left hand fell in the fireplace and was badly burnt.

In 1956, father was transferred to Baramulla in north Kashmir. Mother refused to live in the government house as it was far from the town where she felt unsafe. It was decided that we will live in a small apartment on one side of the veterinary hospital complex. We all, father and mother and the five children, would sleep on the floor in the living room and what I remember most is how father would go over English lessons with my brother Avinash when the rest of us were still asleep in the morning.

In January 1957, there was much whispering in the bazaar that Pakistan would attack Kashmir at the end of the month. On that day a long convoy of military trucks passed the highway, which lay in front of our home, to the border outpost of Uri. The soldiers let out the war cry: "*Jaya Durga!*". The stratagem of sending troops on that day was to effectively double the number of soldiers at the border, which number was otherwise limited and monitored by the United Nations officials stationed in Srinagar.

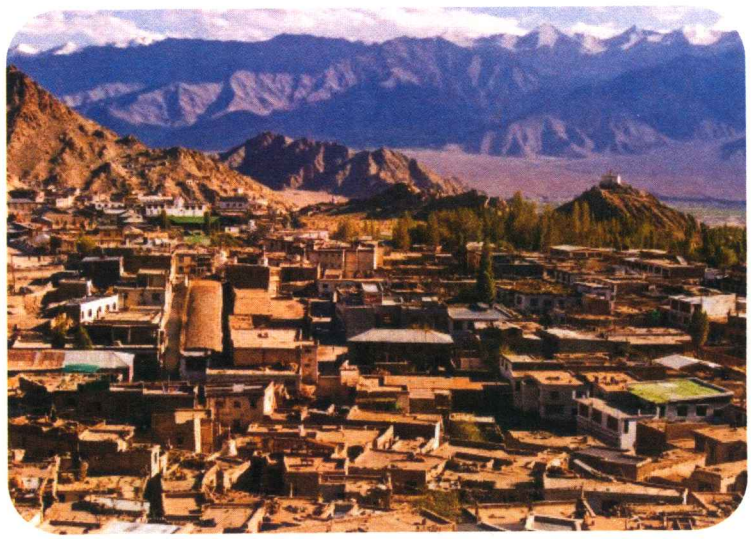
In 1957, father was transferred to Leh. Ladakh was far and remote. The road between Kashmir valley and Leh had not been completed and the only way to reach was by air. Ladakh also felt remote because the language of that area is different from Kashmiri as is its culture which is an extension of the Tibetan culture.

Ladakh became etched in the Kashmiri imagination when it was snatched from the local raja Tradup Namgyal by the Dogra general Zorawar Singh in 1834. The Namgyal family was given the jagir of Stok, just outside Leh, which it nominally retains to this day.

Kashmiris were fearful of the Ladakh postings because in the past government officers and their families on pony trains had perished in snowstorms on way to or back from

the place. People in Skardu, Gilgit, and other places had lost their lives during the war less than ten years ago. Surrendering soldiers had been slaughtered at many mountain outposts. Although tensions between India and Pakistan remained high, there was confidence in Indian capacity to defend Kashmir.

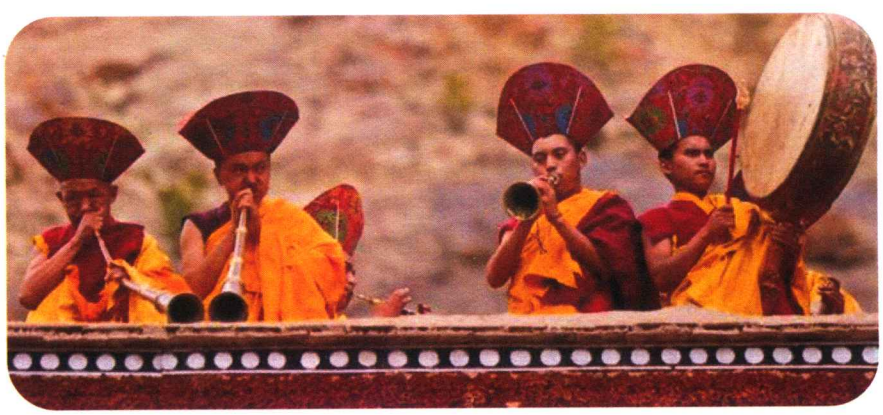
In reality, travel to Ladakh was no longer dangerous because it was now on the air map, connected to Srinagar by Douglas DC-3 Dakota planes. During the India-Pakistan War, Ladakh had been saved by General Thimayya's airlifting of a small tank to the Leh Airport which gave an exaggerated impression of Indian strength to the Pakistani informants, and Pakistan decided to retire from this theater of War.



Leh town, Ladakh

Ladakh had old links with Kashmir. Its capital Leh was at the crossroads of trade and culture between Central Asia, Tibet, and Kashmir. The one-thousand year old Alchi monastery in the Leh district has the earliest surviving paintings in the Kashmiri style. One of the paintings here is believed to be the representation of King Lalitāditya's enormous *chaitya* in the town of Parihāsapura which housed a correspondingly large Buddha. The Parihāsapura monuments became models for Buddhist architecture from Afghanistan to Japan.

The most striking Ladakhi custom those days was polyandry in which a woman has several husbands, who are generally brothers. Although there was nothing like this in Kashmir, the idea itself was not so strange due to the five husbands of Draupadi in the Mahabharata. Presumably this tradition arose to keep the population in check in the inhospitable climate of the highlands. Gompas (monasteries) were the refuge for the unmarried women who became chomos, or nuns. The youngest son in the family was also sent to the gompa to become a lama. The Ladakhis practiced male primogeniture and the property went to the eldest son.



Hemis Gompa festival

Flight to Leh

We were excited about father's transfer but also fearful of the cold that awaited us in the Ladakhi winter. Leh is at 11,500 feet and its air is thin. It was considered a hardship posting that merited a double salary. It was decided that father, Avinash and I would go there first and mother and the rest of the family (sisters Shakti and Jaishree and the baby boy Neeraj) will follow in three months.

I remember the flight in the Indian Airlines Dakota from Srinagar to Leh in the summer of 1957. We were received by someone in a jeep which was one of just a few automobiles in Ladakh at that time for the road between Kashmir and Ladakh was yet to be completed and the jeeps were brought to Ladakh by transport plane. Every few days planes would bring supplies to the Leh valley, but in winter bad weather could prevent airplanes from landing for weeks. When the cargo planes had not landed for a long time, the supplies were air-dropped.

We found ourselves in a flat that lay behind the veterinary dispensary on the main bazaar at the edge of the town. On the side of it was the flat of father's colleague Gopi Nath Safaya. The flat consisted of two rooms and kitchen together with an outhouse. The compound was walled and within it was a vegetable patch. Behind the flat lay the property of the high school.

It was Avinash's and my responsibility to cook the pot of rice and the vegetable or meat that went with it on the primus stove. Like Kulgam, Leh had no electricity and in the evenings we lit dim kerosene lamps. It was father's rule that we were to keep up until ten at night to study our books. We would be so tired much before that time that often we just kept the pretence of being awake while dozing off sitting around the kerosene lamp.

Three months passed quickly and mother and the siblings arrived. It was getting chilly and we were outfitted in traditional Ladakhi *goncha*, a robe of woolen cloth with a cummerbund tied at the waist.

It was common to see villagers with huge burn scars on their faces, necks or other parts of the body. Father explained that this was the branding administered to them by their traditional Amchi doctors. We spent two years in Leh. I picked up rudimentary Ladakhi and in fact I still remember by Ladakhi numbers.

We saw several Ladakhi Buddhist ceremonies at the palace and the bazaar where the lamas did their slow dance to chants accompanied by resonant drums and low, sustained syllables. The sound of the long trumpet *dung chen*, with its deep resonant bass and that of the gongs was very different from anything I had heard before. Many laypersons and monks walked with their prayer drums with the mantra *Om Mani Padme Hum*. We heard singing bowls made of seven different metals. Gold, silver, mercury, copper, iron, tin, and lead represent the sun, the moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn and the theory is that the singing bowl copies the music of the spheres.

Bhavan - the ancient temple at Anantnag

Leh was beautiful in the brief summer when the valley was a green oasis with little rivulets and the large Sindh River flowing in the middle. The winter was extremely cold, especially for us Kashmiris. Whereas the Ladakhis slept above the kitchen that was warmed by the fire in the stove, we slept in drafty rooms, smothered in blankets, and the wood heater was used only sparingly in the living room when we had visitors.

We heard rumors of Chinese incursions across the border. In the bazaar we saw merchants from Sinjiang who had fled Chinese rule.

It was in Leh that I was to see for the first time the mourning procession of Muharram in which people strike their bodies with chains and knives and beat their breasts to the chants of "Ya Hussain" with loud wails of lamentation. We had not been aware that Leh had a sizeable community of Shia Muslims.

The Kashmiris in Leh got together once a month over dinner that was hosted by a different family. During the many months of winter, much time was spent playing cards and reading fiction. My mother got hooked on Urdu novels and to find out what is it she loved so much I learnt the script and read some of these romances myself. The closest friends of my parents were the Safayas and the Kashkaris. Dr Som Nath Kashkari was the government medical doctor. Their daughter, Veena and we children became playmates. Veena was to train to be a doctor died and die a tragic early death. Much later, her cousin, Neel Kashkari who had been raised in the United States, played an important role in the great recession of 2008-2009 achieving international fame.

The only name I remember from the high school was that of the principal, one E. Jolden, a very dignified Ladakhi Christian, one of a handful that had been converted in the 1880s by Moravian missionaries, who I think was an excellent administrator.

I also remember two youngish Kashmiri school teachers who would excitedly speak about the theories of Marx and Lenin and how the world was going to change. It sounds funny now that these two would-be revolutionaries had no better prospect to speak to than an eleven-year old!

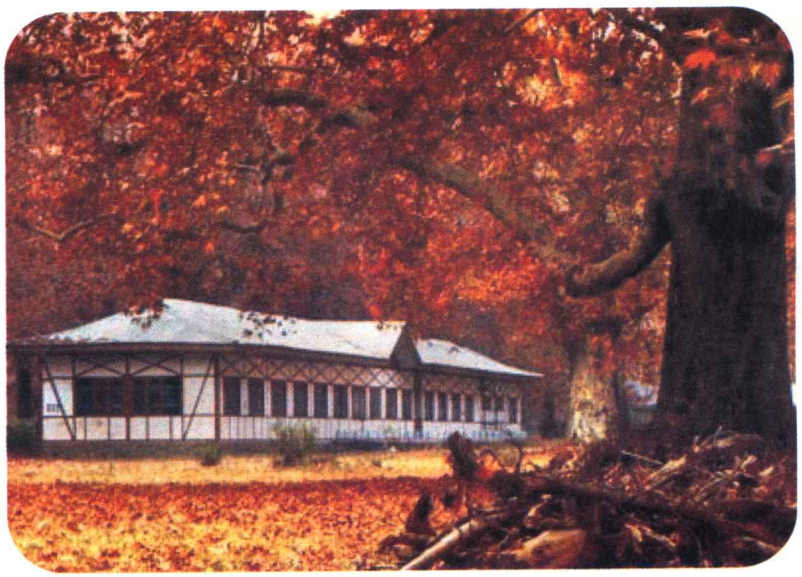
Avinash was preparing for his tenth grade examinations. He was given a separate ante-room for study. Since he didn't always have a clock in his room he drew lines marking shadows created by sunlight on the walls and correlated that with time of the day. He seemed to have independently discovered the idea of the sundial.

The Leh high school did not teach beyond the tenth grade so it was decided that Avinash will go to Kapurthala for college and live with Babuji, like father himself had done years ago.

Anantnag and Naseem Bagh

I was in twelve when father was transferred to Anantnag, South Kashmir's largest city, situated not very far from Kulgam where we had lived three years earlier. School education in Kashmir was going through a period of transition and Anantnag had two high schools: the newer called the Higher Secondary school that had been selected to follow the new curriculum, and other called Central High that followed the old curriculum. The Central High had very few facilities and it had no laboratories or library. We sat on mats on the floor.

My mother's cousin, my uncle, Manohar Nath Kaul (Mana-Kak to the general public and Mamaji to us), lived in Anantnag and he was an influential functionary of the National Conference Party. Through his intersession I was allowed to borrow books from the library of the Town Area Committee and in a period of a year or so I read every book there that ranged from history to politics to fiction.



Naseem Bagh, Srinagar

We lived on the premises of the veterinary hospital on the second floor of the building. This place was on the edge of the town on the road to Khanabal on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. After a devastating fire in which a large part of the town burnt down, which included Mana-Kak's house in the old city, his family moved to the second floor of the building next to ours and so he was our neighbor for some time. Later, when father was given another assignment in Bijbehara, just a few miles north of Anantnag, we moved to an apartment on the second floor of a government building that lay quite close to the heart of the town.

We were now again immersed in the active social life of the Kashmiri community. Anantnag had an ancient temple with an impressive spring where we went for play and bath. Apart from Mana-Kak's family, we also had visits by relatives from Srinagar and by itinerant swamis.

The hospital had two resident breeding bulls that had lived as companions for several years until one was sent to another town. I remember tears rolling down the cheeks of the bull left behind. It was moving to learn that animals were not all that different from us.

I finished high school in 1961 and joined the local college for the year-long pre-university course. The high school examinations took place in March/April. Didda, my father's adoptive mother, passed away just before the examinations and my parents and siblings left for Srinagar for the various observances. My father arranged for Dwarka Nath, who was an employee in the Department, to be with me for this period and do the cooking for me. Dwarka Nath was from a village near Pahalgam but he and Pitaji had known each other for over 15 years. Although he was a lowly employee in the Department, he was the disciple of a guru in Pahalgam who had been very fond of Pitaji and Mummy, and in that sense he was my father's equal in spiritual aspiration.

A sadhu had left the complete edition of the Hindi translation of the *Bhagavata Purana* at home. Now that my mother was not there to check me, I spent the entire period of the examinations immersed reading the *Bhagavata Purana*. I don't think I understood the deeper spiritual meaning of the text, but at the level of the stories in it, the book was simply astonishing and quite unlike anything I had read before.

Dwarka Nath took excellent care of me. We slept in the same room on different wooden beds. Since I was reading the *Bhagavata Purana* like a maniac night and day, I saw that he woke up around 3 in the morning, and did his spiritual practice sitting on the bed with the blanket over him, staying in this posture for several hours.

In a few weeks the results of the statewide examination came in. I had done quite well and obtained a top rank in

the entire state.

I joined the Anantnag College at Khanabal and I would ride there on bicycle. This college had the best library I had seen up till then and it opened up the whole world to me. I read all the books of European and American fiction and considerable amount of philosophy, biography, and history. Reading these books made me want to be an author.

During the summer, we had several visitors who were spending their vacations in Kashmir.

Trip to Jhajjar and Delhi

In Kashmir, the schools and colleges would close in December and then reopen in late March. Most of the days when it snowed the kids were stuck indoors. My parents decided that I should spend these months with Babuji, who upon his retirement from Randhir College in Kapurthala, had accepted appointment as principal of a new college in Jhajjar in Haryana. I was given a few rupees and put on a bus passing through Khanabal (near Anantnag) for Jammu. I had been advised to have a coolie take my holdall and bag to the *dharamshala* where I had to pay fifty paise to open my bed and sleep.

Om Mani Padme Hum in Tibetan Script

I woke up at dawn and went straight to the bus stop when I caught the bus to Pathankot from where I was to catch the train to Delhi and then a bus to Jhajjar. I didn't know that the bus left Pathankot for Delhi only in the evening. I arrived at the Pathankot station when it was still morning and saw a train for the first time and was impressed. Now I had to wait for several hours before the ticket office opened and then wait several more hours.

It was too late to get ticket to the sleeper coach and I sat up the entire night afraid that if I were to doze off someone would walk off with my bag at the next station. By the time I reached Jhajjar the next day, I was so tired that I fell into a sleep for several hours and was quite disoriented when I awoke.

In Jhajjar, I remember reading the Greek playwrights Aeschylus, Euripides, and Sophocles and the British Marlowe and Shakespeare. My uncle, Babuji, was a strict person who spoke little and my aunt, Bibiji, was very hard of hearing and she didn't speak much either. For a time, for a week or so, there were two very attractive girls, daughters of a friend of Babuji's, who were visiting, but I was too shy to speak with them.

After Jhajjar, I spent several days with the Rainas (Babuji's daughter Hem and her family) in Delhi in the professors' housing just behind Hindu College. Nikki was just three years younger than me and so we became good friends. There were also two daughters of Professor Misra from the house next door who would join our games.

The Rainas were very hospitable and caring and finding that I had very few clothes, they took me to the tailor and got me new sets of clothes. I had time to sightsee around Delhi and hang around bookstores near the university and in Connaught Place.

I assumed that after the pre-university course, I will join a degree college for further studies in science or literature. The other thought was that like Avinash, who had gone to engineering college in Madras (Chennai) after completing his college in Kapurthala, I would also get into engineering. But somehow months passed and one day my mother woke up to the fact that the deadline for admission to the engineering college in Srinagar, which had opened the previous year, was approaching fast. Since time was short, she arranged for my application to be hand carried to the college.

I was called for an interview but told there that I was below age. I believe I was rejected as the quota for the Kashmiri Hindu students had filled up very quickly. This was in spite of the fact that I had passed the pre-university examination with a top rank in the state! They passed me over for other students who had connections for they could give the excuse that I was too young.

A few weeks later, I heard again from the college with the word that I had been admitted in an additional intake of students. We were to hear later that this admission was a result of a complaint in a personal audience with India's President Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in Delhi by a Kashmiri student who, like me, had been denied admission based on the quota system.

The day to leave for the college arrived and my parents saw me off in the bus that stopped in front of our home. As my father kissed me goodbye and turned away, I saw tears in his eyes for the first time.

There was no hostel accommodation for the large group that was admitted due to the intercession of India's President. We were housed in big open halls of quickly erected wooden barracks. The regular hostels were also in barracks, but those were divided into rooms and five students were housed in each room. Our barrack had 30 or 40 students in rows of beds, divided by tables, in rows on both sides.

I was originally assigned mining and metallurgy but after a few months we were told that this specialization was going to be closed and we were given the choice to pick another area of specialization. I picked electrical engineering in part because Avinash was doing it in Madras.

The college was established a couple of years earlier in barracks under the chinar trees of a magnificent Mughal garden facing the Dal Lake, next to the town of Hazratbal, an ancient Hindu pilgrimage centre that is now one of the most important Muslim shrines in the valley. I was reluctant to apply for admission but Mummy said I had to do it because there was no way I was going to be able to feed my family as a writer.

People from all over Kashmir in their pherans and blankets began to converge on Hazratbal. Their fury was boundless and they wept and wailed, fearing that they had lost the blessing forever, and cursed whoever they thought was behind the sacrilege.

The five years I spent at the engineering college in Naseem Bagh were of discovery. Its library was much better than any I had seen. My teachers were more knowledgeable; a few of them had Ph.D. This college was residential and about half the student body was from outside the state.

The China War

Soon after I joined the college, the China-India war began. On October 20, 1962, China attacked south of the Karakoram Pass at the northwest end of the Aksai Chin Plateau and in the Pangong Lake area. The defending Indian forces lost their posts in the area of the Karakoram Pass and from most posts near Pangong Lake. However, they put up spirited resistance at the key posts of Daulat Beg Oldi and Chushul (located immediately south of Pangong Lake and at the head of the vital supply road to Leh.

In the eastern sector, in Assam, the Chinese forces advanced relatively easily. By November 18, they had penetrated close to the outskirts of Tezpur, Assam, a major frontier town. The Chinese did not advance farther and on November 21 declared a unilateral cease-fire. By the time the fighting stopped, each side had lost 500 troops. Jawaharlal Nehru's prestige suffered a grievous blow.

Next year, Nehru tried to regain political initiative by bringing in fresh blood in the administration through the so-called Kamaraj plan. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, Kashmir's iron-fisted chief minister for a decade, a political lightweight named Khwaja Shamsuddin. Shamasuddin. Mana Kak was appointed Revenue Minister and I heard him give a pretty good speech at a political rally honoring him. We were overjoyed that our genial and unassuming relative had reached such a high position in the government.

The Theft of the Prophet's Hair

The winter of 1963 had been particularly severe. I remember that in Anantnag during the weekend of November 22 the taps were frozen in my parents' apartment that overlooked the city bus stop. I picked up the newspaper the next day from the vendor with the news of President Kennedy's death, and in my other hand I carried bucket of water from the public water tap to take it up the stairwell.

In early December the college shut down and I was back in Anantnag for the winter holidays. It was snowing and bitterly cold in late December. Late evening on 26 December, people started talking agitatedly around in the market that we could see from our second-story window. Later we heard out that the relic of Prophet Muhammad's hair had disappeared from the Hazratbal shrine (situated not too far away from my engineering college). Resentment and anger began to build up rapidly and next day the town shut down and bus traffic, excepting to Srinagar to take people to the shrine, came to a halt.

According to legend, the prophet's hair was first brought

to India by Syed Abdullah, a descendant of the prophet Muhammad who settled in Bijapur. He later sold it to a Kashmiri businessman and through his daughter who was married into the Banday family of Kashmir, the descendants of the Bandays became the keepers of the relic. The hair was kept in a glass tube and it was shown to the worshipers at the Hazratbal shrine on just a few days of the year.

People from all over Kashmir in their *pheran*s and blankets began to converge on Hazratbal. Their fury was boundless and they wept and wailed, fearing that they had lost the blessing forever, and cursed whoever they thought was behind the sacrilege. Some alleged that someone had stolen the relic, if not to destroy it, then at least to insult the Prophet of Islam. Hundreds of thousands of mourners who surrounded the Hazratbal shrine were absolutely inconsolable and refused to move away from there, as days passed without any trace of the missing relic. They greeted the state government's reassuring noises with contempt.

Mercifully, there was no violence even though the prevalent rage was unmistakable and the situation was becoming more menacing with the passage of time. In Anantnag, if violence had broken out and taken aim at the small Hindu minority, we would have been wiped out.

The crisis had broken out during Shamsuddin's watch but he was inexperienced. Nehru sent the Home Secretary V. Vishwanathan to Srinagar. On 4th January the government announced that the relic had been recovered, and a caretaker at Hazratbal had been arrested. If the government has assumed that this would be the end of the crisis, it was mistaken. The crowds declared this was a ruse and they insisted on proper verification that the hair that had been found was indeed the missing relic.

The government was wary of the idea of verification. What if the people said that it was a fake? After lengthy negotiation it was decided that a special deedar (showing) of the hair would take place. On the appointed date and time, a huge crowd assembled in Hazratbal. There was a hush as the relic in the glass tube was displayed and everyone was waiting with bated breath about what would happen next.

An old maulavi associated with the dargah now stepped forward and inspected the relic for several seconds and then declared in a clear voice that this was indeed the holy relic. The crowd burst into wild cheers.

Although the immediate crisis was over, the standoff between the government and the agitators went on for weeks. The shops were still shuttered around the valley. The police was everywhere. The common person was going through a lot of inconvenience and the shopkeepers and businessmen were continuing to lose money. Finally the government and the leaders of the agitation arrived at a face-saving formula for the markets to be open again.

In Anantnag, as at other places, a whole army of men with huge hammers descended and they methodically broke padlocks of the shuttered shops going from one street to another as we watched. At the end of this process, the shopkeepers arrived back at their shops since now they could claim that they had to do so to safeguard their property. The next day, life returned to normal in the valley.

The mystery of who had stolen the relic and how it was found was never made public. Poor Khwaja Shamsuddin paid the price for his bad luck and he lost his job at the end of February, after being in office for less than five months.

The Ghosts of Kashmir's Past

The affair of the holy relic brought to the open the ambivalence the Kashmiri Muslim felt for the existing political arrangement. Kashmir's most popular politician, Sheikh Abdullah, was in jail. His political career was launched with an agitation for reforms in 1931 during the rule of Maharaja Hari Singh. Next year a political party, Muslim Conference, was formed with Abdullah as its first president. Under pressure from the British, the Maharaja set up a legislative assembly of seventy five members, thirty three of whom would be elected on a communal basis, and an extremely limited franchise. When first convened in 1934, 19 of the 21 seats allotted to the Muslims were won by the Muslim Conference. Sheikh Abdullah was much influenced by Jawaharlal Nehru, whom he first met in 1937. He was endeavoring to define a special position for the Kashmiri Muslims, and he appears to have calculated that Pakistani politics would eventually lead to Punjabi cultural domination.

At the time of the partition of India in 1947, the Maharaja was hoping that the State would remain independent. But the attack by the Pakistanis in October 1947 forced his hand. As the Pakistanis reached the outskirts of Srinagar, the Maharaja sought the aid of the Indian army. He was advised that this could not be done unless the State acceded to the Indian Union. Sheikh Abdullah

accompanied the Maharaja's Minister to Delhi to communicate to the Indian government acceptance by the Maharaja of all Indian conditions. On 26 October 1947 the Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession.

Indian troops were flown in to protect Srinagar on October 27. Soon the Pakistani soldiers were in retreat. By November 14 most of the Valley was in the control of the Indian army.

In 1948 the war continued at other fronts. Pakistan tried to cut off Ladakh from Kashmir but it was unable to do so. In the autumn of 1948 the Indian army captured Poonch in the Jammu province. The Indian army now threatened to cut the Pakistan controlled area in two by reaching the international border beyond Poonch. Pakistan now wished to enlarge the conflict by attacking Jammu so that the State would be cut off from India. There was great pressure on both countries to stop fighting and cease-fire took effect on 1 January 1949.

Nehru's last journey

In March 1948, Sheikh Abdullah was appointed the prime minister of an interim government of the State. A Constituent Assembly was convened in October 1951. In 1952, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah signed an agreement in Delhi which specified that the State of Jammu and Kashmir, while part of the Indian Union, yet enjoyed certain unique rights and privileges within the Union. Thus citizens of the State had rights related to land ownership within the State which were denied to Indians from outside the State.

Sheikh Abdullah now began to implement a program that had been outlined by the National Conference in 1944 in a manifesto entitled Naya Kashmir. This amounted to a one-party government dedicated to social reform in the style of the Soviet Union. Sweeping land reforms were implemented in 1953. But there was also a suppression of dissent and increasing bureaucratization with its attendant corruption. Sheikh Abdullah's goal appeared to be autonomy for the Kashmiris, but he was unwilling to allow real democracy to the other regions of Jammu and Ladakh. Growing tensions in the State led to his dismissal and detention in August 1953. He was succeeded as prime minister of the State by a very corrupt Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who ruled with an iron hand for ten years.

The Constituent Assembly decided upon a constitution which came into operation in January 1957. But this constitution formalized inequities in the political structure that had seeds in it for trouble down the road. The constituencies were delimited in a fashion that perpetuated control by the Kashmiris of the Valley. The typical constituency in the Valley had a population of 50,000 whereas it was 85,000 in the Jammu region.

All citizens of the State excepting Kashmiri Pandits were declared backward, and therefore deserving of special favors in admission to schools and colleges, and in government jobs. The aim of the quota system was systematic discrimination against Kashmiri Pandits, even though they were in a minority of less than two percent.

State employees like my father suffered under this system. This policy was part of a larger pattern that political parties around the country used to make coalitions with religious and ethnic groups. Given such a system, devoid of ethical principles, it was well-nigh impossible to get enthused about political life or government service.

The winter of 1964

Our winter examinations of 1964 had finished and we were preparing to pack up and leave for our winter vacation. It snowed heavily on the night of 10th December which halted the bus service out of Hazratbal. Then the electricity failed. The next day was clear and windy and the temperature began plunging until it hit minus 10 degree Celsius. The roads became iced and the Dal Lake began to freeze. The word came that the bus services were cancelled in the entire valley. Marooned in our hostels, we were miserable in our hostel rooms without power. The dining services ran out of supplies, and we were only served tea and an occasional snack.

We had to do something to get out of Naseem Bagh. On 14 December, my friend Som Nath Pandit and I decided to walk the ten miles over frozen and icy road to Srinagar to find out when the bus service out of Srinagar might be restored. Picking our steps carefully in the empty streets, we appeared at the door of my Mamaji Kashi Nath Kaul's

place at the Bund. Mamiji prepared us a hot meal which revived us. We left word with her to inform my parents in Anantnag, should they send someone to check, that I was fine.

At the bus office, we discovered that whereas there was chance that the bus to Anantnag might resume the next day, Hazratbal was expected to remain cut off for several more days. We walked back to Hazratbal in the evening and decided to leave our belongings, which we were normally expected to take to our homes for the vacations, in our room, and the next day we walked back to Srinagar. I had to wait at the bus stop for hours before first bus in five days left for Anantnag at 4:30 p.m. and I was lucky to get a seat. The thirty mile journey took over four hours as we had to clear the road and push the bus at several places. My parents were surprised to see me knock at the door at 9 p.m.

The winter passed in Anantnag like previous years. Our apartment was cold and all we had was an electric heater in the living room to warm ourselves by bending over it. Often its heating element would short out and then using a screwdriver one would stretch the separated pieces of the element to restore the connection. Many times, while tinkering with the electric heater, one would get a nasty shock. Since a lot of people used these unauthorized heaters, the actual voltage was much less that the nominal 220 volts, and perhaps that was the reason that the shocks did not lead to fatality.

Nehru died in May 1964. He was succeeded by the diminutive Lal Bahadur Shastri. His size made him the butt of jokes by the Pakistan radio and believing their own propaganda that one Pakistani was stronger than four Indians, the Pakistani government began preparing to attack India of which we were to hear later.

Our college did not have laboratory facilities in electric power, and so next year in June the students were sent to Thapar Engineering College in Patiala where we did the experiments while the college's own students were off on summer vacations. It was extremely hot and the maximum temperature hovered in the range 45-47 degrees Celsius. I had never experienced such heat before.

We returned from our Patiala visit in early July. Later that month, I saw Karan Singh, the Governor of the State and we talked about poetry and chess, in both of which he was interested. On second August, I heard that I had stood first in an essay writing competition organized by All India Radio, Srinagar. The next day my essay was recorded and when it was played back in the studio I realized it sounded pretty good. I was to have more opportunities to broadcast on the radio.

The Pakistan War

Around this time, Pakistan was secretly sending militia soldiers across the border to create unrest in Kashmir. We began to hear of small bombs going off in all kinds of places and children being injured when they picked up stray fountain pens and toys. The idea was that the militia, in collaboration with local agents, will begin an uprising. The Pakistani army would then pour across the border and it would capture Kashmir.

Around this time, Pakistan was secretly sending militia soldiers across the border to create unrest in Kashmir. We began to hear of small bombs going off in all kinds of places and children being injured when they picked up stray fountain pens and toys. The idea was that the militia, in collaboration with local agents, will begin an uprising.

Pakistan tested Shastri in the Rann of Kutch dispute at this time and found him weak-kneed. Believing that Indian military had not recovered from its loss to China, the Pakistani president Ayub Khan now pressed ahead with the plan to conquer Kashmir.

On August 5, 1965 the war became open when over 30,000 Pakistani soldiers crossed the border dressed as Kashmiri locals headed for various areas within Kashmir. The Indians responded with their air force, and we could see and hear fighter planes screech overhead, the firing of tracer bullets, and convoys of military trucks on the highway off to the border.

The initial battles were contained within Kashmir and they involved both infantry and armor supported by air force. In early September, Pakistani forces attacked Akhnur in Jammu to choke Indian supply line to Kashmir, and India countered by attacking targets in Pakistani Punjab, forcing the Pakistanis to disengage from Akhnur. There was a large but indecisive engagement in the Sialkot region where some 400 to 600 tanks squared off.

By September 22 both sides had agreed to a UN mandated cease-fire ending the war that had become

largely a stalemate although India held somewhat larger territory. Pakistanis, raised on the propaganda of their martial prowess were shocked that their country had come close to military defeat by Hindu India. Pakistanis blamed their failure on the ineptitude of Ayub Khan.Games and Pastimes

I became a sort of a celebrity in the college when as new student I won the general knowledge quiz, open to all students of the college, that Moonis Raza, the new Dean of students, had instituted. In fact I won this annual quiz each of the years I was in college. I became the chess champion of the college in 1964. I was also playing a lot of table tennis and became one of the best in the college.

Later I won the university chess tournament that allowed me to represent Jammu and Kashmir University in India's first inter-university chess tournament that was held in Srinagar. I wrote poetry in English and Hindi and participated in various sports.

My experience with the bureaucratic culture of the college was not so pleasant. It was common for professors to hold court like ministers or officers in government departments. Moonis Raza, who was soon promoted to principal, held a court for those who aspired to be recognized as leaders in student organizations. Such courts were presumably held to build bridges with the students, and to make the participating student feel that he was somehow a part of the professor's larger family, and one could walk in to the court at any time. This style is part of the bureaucratic culture of India. But I concluded that this style did not suit me.

Moonis Raza, who had been a leftist leader in his student days at Aligarh Muslim University, was a man of culture, and he encouraged me in my poetry writing. He even offered to arrange for my book of poems to be published. On many occasions, we talked about politics in India and elsewhere.

Very early at the college I had an unpleasant experience on the cricket field. I challenged a senior student, who was a bully, when he kept on bowling although he had completed his over. He struck me and although I was in the right no one on the field spoke up for me. I left the field, my mouth bleeding, helpless about the matter.

I spent days and weeks reflecting on the individual's obligations in the face of violence and power. I was to experience this situation again when I was physically assaulted by a mathematics lecturer for laughing in his class. This time there was an inquiry and the lecturer left the college.

There were rumors that some instructors would disclose examination papers in advance to students who had political connections. Since promotions in the college were influenced by ministers, some instructors did this to advance their careers.

In this atmosphere I thought it was best to keep doing one's own things. I spent a lot of time playing games and, in summer, swimming in the Dal Lake. I remained interested in philosophy, but not as an academic discipline but rather in its original meaning of "love of wisdom." I also spent time writing poetry and reading literature. In sciences, I was attracted to physics and I tried to make whatever sense I could of modern physics and its paradoxes. My capstone thesis was on quantum electrodynamics.

In early July, we hiked to the Gangabal Lake to the north of Srinagar. The Lake is at 11,800 feet and we had to cross a point as high as 12,000 feet to reach it. One particular day, we walked about 26 miles reaching the lake via Naranag, a gain of 5,000 feet at the highest point. The Haramukh... peaks looked majestic.

In 1966, Pitaji was transferred from Anantnag to Cheshma Shahi farm as its manager. One of the famed Mughal gardens, this place was just outside Srinagar on a hill overlooking the Dal Lake and diagonally across the Lake from Hazratbal. My parents were provided an old house on the hill next to the famous springs. On a rainy weekend there, I discovered that the roof of the house needed much work. But it was, nevertheless, a most charming place.

My brother, Avinash, completed his engineering degree in mid-1966, and, awaiting his results, he came to my engineering college and became a junior lecturer for the summer months. In late May, Avinash, I, and 13 other boys hiked to the Kaunsarnag Lake. The distance that we covered on foot, from Shopian to Kaunsarnag and back, was about 50 miles.

The Kaunsarnag Lake is at the top of a mountain on high ground. Our guide, not wanting to climb to the top, insisted that the lake was at the base and we couldn't see it

as it was covered in ice and snow. We were not quite sure if what he was saying was true, so we climbed the mountain any way and reached the high ground. The lake lay some more distance beyond a hill but we couldn't see it from our perch. We slid down the mountain and walked back to Shopian. Although we had enjoyed ourselves greatly, we had not reached the goal.

In early July, we hiked to the Gangabal Lake to the north of Srinagar. The Lake is at 11,800 feet and we had to cross a point as high as 12,000 feet to reach it. One particular day, we walked about 26 miles reaching the lake via Naranag, a gain of 5,000 feet at the highest point. The Haramukh (from Sanskrit *Haramukuta*, or Shiva's diadem) peaks looked majestic. These peaks that rise close to 17,000 feet and are surrounded by glaciers dominate the view to the north from most of the Kashmir valley. The Gangabal trek has been a great pilgrimage for the Kashmiris for centuries.

Meanwhile, Avinash got word that he was selected by the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi to do his Ph.D. straight after his B.E. that he had completed in Madras.

In 1966, there was a serious drought in Bihar and we collected funds in the College for the Relief Funds. Later that year we went on strike for a day against police firing on students in Jammu. We went in a procession to the College principal and then the group assembled for a large meeting in the Dining Hall of the New Campus of the College. I was pushed up to stand on a table to give a speech and read our resolutions regarding the matter. That was heady stuff.

In December, our class from the college went on an India tour in the College bus. The trip took us through Jammu, Ludhiana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Aligarh, Agra, Shivapuri, Bhopal, Burhanpur, to Bombay (now Mumbai). In Delhi, I spent two of the four nights with my brother at his IIT Delhi hostel room and was most impressed with the campus of the Institute. Avinash suggested that he would be most happy if I was also selected to do Ph.D. there like him.

An incident with enormous impact on me occurred during this tour. We were at the Bombay Zoo, a stop on an across the country college trip, and I was observing a pair of bears in their cage when my eyes met theirs and I experienced an overpowering feeling of mutual recognition. As I was reflecting on this feeling, the bears suddenly turned violent and started striking each other in apparent rage. Soon they were bleeding from their many wounds. I felt I was also a bear, although in a human body. It appeared as if the bears had put up the show to amuse me, to teach how it all amounted to nothing.

I was an animal, but I was an animal with special knowledge. The experience was ego shattering, but it was also oceanic: it seemed to expand my consciousness.

The experience hung about me for months. I felt that consciousness was universal, and this appeared to give me a feeling of power. I seemed to be able to get out of my skin and empathize with almost everyone else. There arose a sense of love that I wished to share with everyone. I also had a strong emotion regarding my mortality. I had experienced a penetrating feeling of death.

The Kashmiri Agitation of 1967

My final examinations ended in late July and all that remained for me was to submit my capstone project and then await the results, which would be announced in November.

Meanwhile, the Kashmiri Pandit community's agitation against the State government that had begun in June took a serious turn. The agitation began over the abduction of a young girl named Parameshwari Handoo, an employee in a State government co-operative shop, whose mother Dhanwati was a widow. The police claimed she had willingly converted to Islam and married her Muslim supervisor in the shop. Her mother said this was not true and she was below the legal age of consent and, in any event, she should be allowed to meet with her so that she would acknowledge to her in person that she had converted and married of her free will.

The police did not listen to Dhanwati's plea for weeks and as the resentment amongst the community built up, the leaders gave a call for Satyagraha. Each day, thousands of Pandits would gather at a specific point and out of the crowd would emerge five people ready to court arrest that day. They would be garlanded and tilak applied to their foreheads. Before arrest they would give a speech. This Satyagraha continued until October.

The entire community got caught in the excitement of the agitation. This included my mother and other women from the neighborhood as well people from villages around the valley. Some of the best speakers at the evening assemblies were women. Like many other engineering college students, I would often come down to Srinagar and listen to the speeches at the demonstration.

As the people got further frustrated with the police inaction, the government employees took mass leave. In retaliation, the police raided the homes of the leaders and activists to arrest them. Many of these went into hiding. I remember my mother fearlessly asking the police to leave when they arrived at our Sathu home to check if someone they wished to arrest was hiding in our home.

As the international media picked up the story, the police increased their pressure on the agitators. A police agent threw acid at some Pandit ladies. Some policemen attacked the demonstrators with rocks. A young Pandit boy was hit by police and died; another was murdered at night. Pandit owned shops were damaged. Srinagar was under curfew.

The Central Government sent high ranking emissaries for negotiations with the leaders of the Pandits. At long last it was agreed that Parameshwari will be released in ten days if the Pandits would halt their agitation. In return, the government released 500 Kashmiri Pandits who had been arrested.

Now the community waited eagerly for the reuniting of the abducted girl and her mother. But nothing happened at the end of the ten days. They waited for a month. The government spread rumors through the press that the girl had fled to Pakistan and maybe she was dead.

The community felt cheated. Everyone was too tired to revive the agitation in Kashmir. Some activists began courting arrest in Delhi, but the movement petered out.

Leaving Srinagar

Pitaji was transferred to Jammu in September from his previous position in Cheshma Shahi and he left for that place with Neeraj. A couple of weeks later, I escorted Shakti to Jammu so that she could start her college year there at the beginning of the term.

I had to go back in Srinagar within a week to follow up on Shakti's inter-college transfer certificate. It took me several weeks of waiting at the college to get that document. Mother, Jaishree, and Bayaji also left for Jammu in the third week of October.

When we were back in Jammu, we found that Jaishree would not to be allowed to take her final examination in Jammu as she had not applied for change of examination centre in time. Now that we had moved, returning to Srinagar to take the examination there was not an option. Furthermore, the situation in Srinagar was still unsafe.

I was sent to Srinagar on 24th November to see if the permission for Jaishree could somehow be obtained. Before doing so, the next day I went to my college and found that my own results were out. I had done very well and in fact had obtained the highest marks in the entire college in the final year.

I waited for a week in Srinagar but could not get Jaishree's papers. The government was concerned that the Hindus were leaving the valley and it was making it hard for Hindu students to change schools to Jammu. I was told that Jaishree needed to apply in person.

I took a bus back to Jammu early in the morning. It was snowing and the traffic moved very slowly. By the evening we had only reached Qazigund and there the police stopped the convoy of buses and trucks due to heavy snowfall further ahead. Qazigund had no hotels and people were now scrambling to find a place for the night where they could unroll their bedding to spend the night. Since I was not carrying any bedding, I asked a Kashmiri Pandit shopkeeper if I could spend the night at his shop. He agreed and gave me a couple of blankets and a pillow and pointed me to a room above his shop. The next morning he did not accept payment.

The convoy took off later the next day. Reaching Jammu, I rested for one night and then set out for Srinagar again with Jaishree. This time the icy conditions forced the bus to halt in Banihal for the night. We were not carrying any bedding even on this trip. But Banihal had better accommodations than Qazigund two night earlier. The passengers trooped to a hotel and this time a kindly Kashmiri Muslim merchant who was traveling with his family let Jaishree use one of his spare beds and let me share the bed with one of his children. The next day, in Srinagar, Jaishree got her permission, and we left Srinagar.

History

Who Planned the 1947 Invasion of Kashmir?

Jawaharlal Kaul

[Revealing some hitherto lesser known and amazing facts, here for the first time the writer presents the 1947 Pakistani invasion of Kashmir in an interesting light.]

When Prime Minister Atlee sent Lord Mountbatten to India, it was not merely his personal whim that prompted him to do so; there was a clear design behind this decision. The Labour Party government had come to the conclusion that Britain could not retain India for long; it had to leave India sooner or later. They decided to leave sooner. There were many ultra conservatives in Britain who wanted to cling to the 'Raj' as long as possible. Former Prime Minister, Winston Churchill was one of them. Had he been the Prime Minister he would have buried the question of India`s Independence at least for a couple of decades. The Conservatives were down but not out. Fortunes could have turned their way in the next elections. So the decision to leave India had to be implemented soon. They needed a suitable person, resourceful and authoritative, for this onerous and delicate job. Mountbatten appeared to be the right choice, an able general, who had enough experience in dealing with Asians and being the cousin of Emperor King George 6th, he was the real representative of the empire

Maharaja Hari Singh

Although Churchill had opposed the decision, it was ironically he who set the tone for the negotiations in India and gave guidelines to the Viceroy for dealing with Hindus and Muslims. Before leaving for India, Mountbatten went to see Churchill to seek advice .The conversation is as illuminating as it is startling. According to Mountbatten when he went to see Churchill, he said; "I am not going to tell you how to do it, but I will tell you one thing. Whatever arrangement you may make, you must see that you don't harm the hair on the head of any single Muslim." Mountbatten replied, "I have no wish to harm a hair of anybody's head. Muslims are largely my army companions. Of course I won`t." "Yes, but they are the people who have been our friends and they are the people Hindus are going to oppress, so you must take steps that they can`t do it." Mountbatten said, " I quite agree."

Mountbatten and his mission:

How strong was this agreement is clear by the fact that Mountbatten, while selecting his advisory staff decided to appoint Pug Ismay as his chief of staff. Ismay had served Churchill in a similar capacity when he was the Prime Minister. So when Mountbatten came to India, his objectives were clear to him. He had to secure North- western borders of India from the danger of Soviet expansion across Central Asian republics and

Afghanistan. The British Government was aware of this danger even before the idea of Indian independence was mooted. As Kashmir was central to this scheme, the government had forced the Maharaja of Kashmir .to sign an agreement which allowed the British to have military control over the long corridor from Kashmir Valley to Afghanistan and Central Asia. This highly strategic corridor consisted of Gilgit, Baltistan (Skardu) , Hunza, Nagar , Chitral, Yasin and Ponial A Gilgit Agency was created for this area and was put under the control of the British Army. But with the independence of India this agreement lapsed. It was therefore important that the plan of partition be prepared in a way so as to allow Pakistan to control the entire area, including Jammu and Kashmir State. The Instrument of Accession gave Indian princes the right to join India or Pakistan or to remain independent. Mountbatten could not ignore the possibility of the Hindu king of Kashmir deciding to join India and creating serious difficulties. A chain of covert activities to save the plan became necessary. The Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, had already earned the displeasure of British imperialists by demanding independence for India. In the Round Table Conference held in London in 1931, Maharaja Hari Singh made this demand as the chairman of the Chamber of Princes. He was a suspect for the British even before, since he had not allowed the British unfettered control over Gilgit, nor did he allow them to meddle in civil administration .This was specifically made clear in the Gilgit Agreement.

Winston Churchil with Lord Mountbatten

Glancy, Colvin, Kak and Abdullah

1. With the full cooperation of Mountbatten, Pakistan adopted a two-pronged strategy on Kashmir. On the one hand it started to force the Maharaja of Kashmir to join Pakistan; on the other hand it started to organize the tribes of the North-West Frontier Province and Waziristan for an invasion of Kashmir. Both these programmes were to be implemented in several phases. and Jammu and Kashmir was to be besieged. This was done by blocking the Jhelum Valley Road, the only all-weather road that joined Kashmir with the rest of India The Banihal Cart Road was an hilly road which was not only unsafe but also remained closed for almost nine months during the rainy srason and throughout winter. Supplies like kerosene, salt, sugar, wheat flour and other essential commodities disappeared overnight. People became panic-stricken and restless. The Pakistani Press was expecting the Kashmir government to surrender any day The Dawn wrote: "Kashmir government is disintegrating. It has already suffered a loss of Rs. 2 crores out of a total revenue of Rs, 4 crores. The tremendous inflation in the prices of necessities has created a feeling of feverish restlessness among the masses. The revenue from customs and forests has almost come to zero."

2. It is not surprising that Governor General Mountbatten knew the grave situation, but it beats logic that Prime Minister of India ignored the pleas of Kashmir government for help to meet this crisis .The purpose of this crisis was to fortify the argument that Pakistan could create anarchy even if Kashmir opted to remain neutral between the two nations. The economic blockade was followed by blocking the inflow of arms needed for Kashmir. Kashmir had no armament factory of its own, and almost all the equipment was supplied from a depot near Rawalpindi in Punjab. The Kashmir Government could not make arrangements to get the arms through East Punjab because specific instructions were issued that no arms for Kashmir were to be issued even if the payment had been already made. Again Indian government refused to help on the plea that Kashmir had not yet taken any decision about accession.

It was at this time Pakistan opened a second front. Major Shah, the personal secretary of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, was already in Srinagar advising the Maharaja about his legal position. Major Shah told Hari Singh that the only person who could take a decision about Kashmir accession was the Maharaja himself. Pakistan could ensure the independence of Kashmir provided the Maharaja accepted Pakistan's suzerainty over the state .Shah wanted Hari Singh to invite Jinnah to Kashmir so that he could convey the assurances himself. Maharaja

Hari Singh was a confused man by now. Two other men worked on him against the interests of India. They were Colonel Colvin, who was the British Political (Intelligence) Agent in Kashmir and acted as Prime Minister for the Maharaja for some time and his Prime Minister Ramchandra Kak. Col. Colvin, along with another Political Agent, Lt. Col. L.E. Lang, was directly responsible to Sir B. J. Glancy, the then Political Secretary of British Government and Head of the Intelligence Wing. Col. Colvin was playing a double game. On one hand he was supposed to maintain law and order, the agitations by Shiekh Abdullah having taken a violent turn, and on the other hand he was acting as a channel between Glancy and Shiekh Abdullah. According to a documented article published in the Blitz, Bombay, Shiekh Abdullah wanted the Director of the Sericulture Department of Jammu and Kashmir to be dismissed and replaced by some Muslim friend of his. He knew that the said Director, H. L. Lal had fallen from grace in the eyes of British Government because under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi he had banned the purchase of British goods for his department. When Sheikh Abdullah complained that the British Government was doing nothing to help him (the Sheikh), Glancy tried to console him: "Unless immediate change in the plan is made, his removal seems impossible. Apart from alteration, the proposal will remain as originally stated. And as I understand from various concerns, the proposal in search of his removal will be attempted in near future. Col. Colvin`s report assures that prompt and up to date arrangements are made... I hope you too remember the directions." Sheikh Abdullah had come into contact with Sir Glancy long before he changed the name of his party in 1939. The British government continued to remain in touch with Abdullah through Col. Colvin.

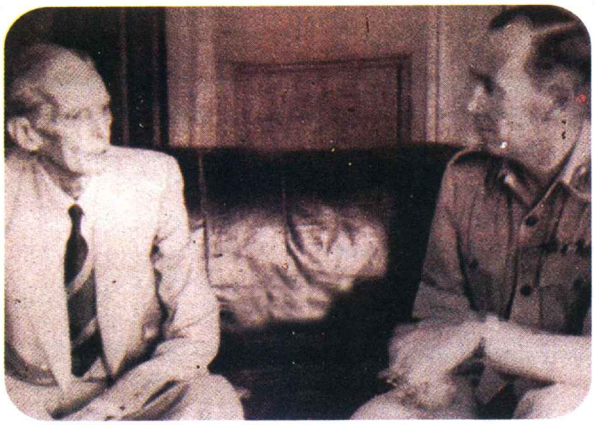
Jawaharlal Nehru with Sheikh Abdullah

Was it a British- Pak venture?

Pakistan changed track when Mehar Chand Mahajan became the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Mahjan convinced Maharaja Hari Singh that his personal future and the future of Kashmir was with India . It was when Major Shah reported to Pakistan that Hari Singh was preparing to sign the Instrument of Accession with India that Pakistan decided to use force to grab Kashmir. To avoid any intervention by India, an attempt was made to kidnap or kill the Maharaja and his Prime Minister, Mahajan before the planned invasion. Pakistan provoked communal clashes in the bordering areas of Jammu. The Maharaja and Mahajan decided to tour some of the affected areas to reassure the people. This tour program was leaked to Pakistan. Hari Singh had to be captured in Bhimber Dak Bungalow. The police chief of Jammu was to supervise the kidnaping. But a sudden decision of Hari Singh saved both of them. They had to reach Bhimber on 21st October after visiting Kathua on October 20. But as soon the motorcade reached the crossing which led to Bhimber, Hari Singh suddenly decided that he would like to visit Bhimber first. He brushed aside Mahajan's objection to this and reached Bhimber one day earlier. The kidnapers arrived next day only to find that the prey had gone. Frustrated and angry, they burned down the building and looted the bazaar of the town. It was the failure to bring the Maharaja around by hook or crook that probably triggered the full- fledged attack, for which preparation had begun even before the Independence of India Act was formally signed.

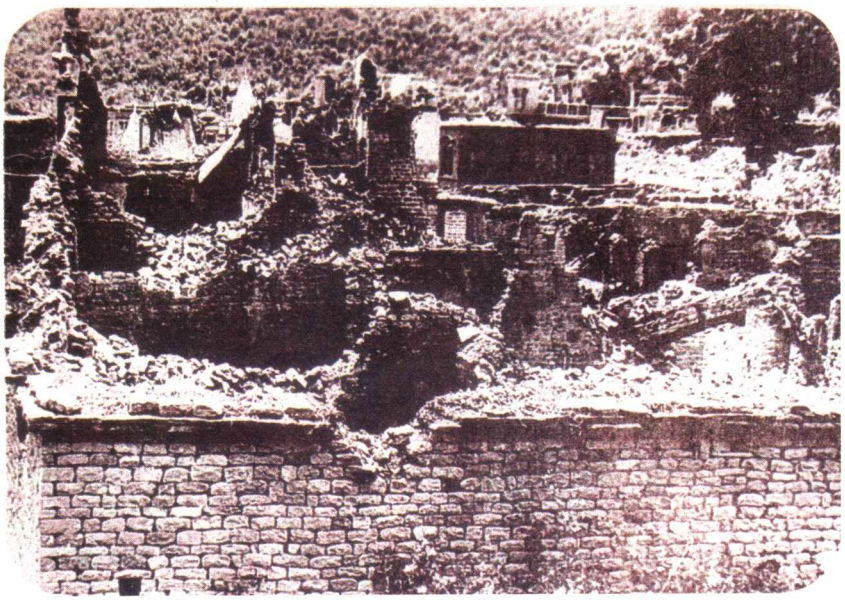
Division of the armed forces didn`t pose any formidable difficulty for experienced military commanders like Mountbatten and the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, General Sir Claude Auchinlick, as the new rulers of India had developed hardly any strategic understanding of the challenges which the new nation had to face in the field of defence. Sir Auchinlick was the man who was entrusted with the job to identify the British officers to be deputed to Pakistan. Those sent to Pakistan were the officers whom Jinnah and the Muslim League trusted. Their mission was to ensure the stability of Pakistan and to help the civilian authorities in implementing the border defence policies. General Sir Frank Messervey was made Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army and George Cunningham took charge of the North-West Frontier Province as its Governor. Of course, General Auchinlick remained the Commander-in- Chief of the Indian Armed Forces. So when mobilization of the Pashtoon and Baluch tribes started

for the attack, he had full knowledge of these British officers and their connivance in it. The Army Chief of India could not have been unaware of the operation, nor could Governor General Mountbatten claim to be ignorant. In fact, the tribes which were mobilized were almost the same which received had grants from British Government as a bribe to remain peaceful during the British Raj. Some of the tribes like the Afridis and the Mehsoods continued to receive the subsidy even after the declaration of the Partition. The so- called *Kabayali* raid was not a mere tribal uprising; the tribesmen were trained and supplied with sophisticated weapons and registered as recipients of military rations and ammunition from well known arms depots of Pakistan. According to the plan, though the initial thrust was to be made by the tribesmen, the Pakistani Army personnel were ready to take over at the appropriate time.



Gen. Sir Frank Messervey with Mohammed Ali Jinnah

What was the role of British officers who commanded the Pakistan Army? The following dispatch from Robert Trumbull, a war correspondent, published in New York Times of January29, 1948, provides the answer: " I interviewed Mr. Haight, who till recently was the Brigadier General of 'Azad Kashmir' forces in Lahore 12 days ago. But I agreed to withhold the story till he let me know by a coded telegram that he was leaving Pakistan. Mr. Haight said, 'Gasoline, a scarce and strictly rationed commodity, was supplied plentifully to the raiders by the Pakistan authorities. The Pakistan Army is running the Azad Kashmir Radio Station, relaying messages through their own receivers, organizing and managing Azad encampments in Pakistan and supplying uniforms, food, arms and ammunition which come from the Army stores. The Azad Kashmir Provisional Government headed by Sardar Mohammad Ibrahim Khan ,who is now in New York, is a Pakistan puppet .High Pakistan government officials , notably Premier of North-West frontier Province Qayoom Khan, is already deeply involved in the raid ." In fact the preparation for the so - called raid were made at the top level with full connivance of British officers. One Major General Akabar Khan was made the overall commander of the operation code- named as "Gulmarg". Akbar khan assumed the name of General Tariq after the name of the Muslim hero who fought the crusaders in Spain to defend Islam. It is inconceivable that Mountbatten and General Auchinlick were ignorant of an attack organized on such a big scale in North-West Province under the nose of Sir Cunningham who was the Governor of the province. The Tribal Raid followed by direct involvement of Pakistan Army was an agreement package accompanying the Instrument of Independence .which was probably was authored in London before Mountbatten came to India. That is what probably Pakistani leaders mean when they say that Kashmir is an unfinished agenda of partition -- the British having not been able to deliver the promised gift.



An Example of Destruction by Pakistani Raiders in 1947

References: Freedom at Midnight, Mountbatten and the Partition of India, Kashmir - Global Untruths Exploded, Statement of Facts (a J & K Government publication), Converted Kashmir.

First Person

Bhramrāchōk

Sushil Pandit

My moment had come. I hadn't planned it too meticulously though. In fact, the plans were still evolving like a work-in-progress. Most mornings, I would go down the stairs with my *māmā* (my mother's brother) and see him off at the door. Today, I was already at the door, waiting for him. And unlike on other days, I had quietly dressed up and, unnoticed by anyone in the morning melee, put on my socks and shoes too. As I heard him hurriedly running down the stairs like he did every morning, my heart began to pound. For a moment, I thought of hiding instead of letting him see me so early and thus risk a botch-up. Trailing him some distance, unseen, and then showing up like a *fait accompli* seemed a better strategy. Before I could decide, he appeared. Even in that rush, one look at me and he perhaps figured what I was up to. He smiled, possibly, at my tenacity for mischief. Something about the way he looked at me told me that he knew.

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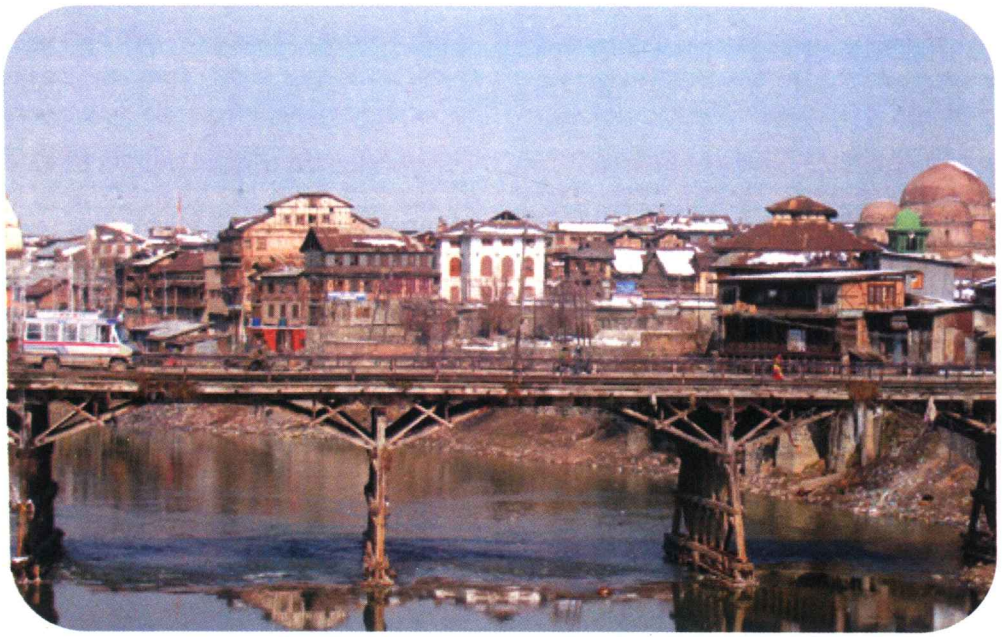
I was a difficult child, difficult for everyone except my father. Fathers those days, generally, did not brook any difficulty posed by their children, sons in particular. Or, so I felt. My father was no exception. To say that he exemplified the times wouldn't be an exaggeration either. In Kashmir, I would often climb to an even higher level of difficulty. There were good reasons. First of all, after the annual exams at school, I, on compassionate grounds, allowed myself a longer rope than usual. Two, while vacationing at *mātāmāl* (my mother's maiden home), the rope automatically stretched and got longer. The presence of a fawning grandmother, doting uncles and adoring aunts around me was like a licence. There were collateral reasons too for all the headaches I caused. In May, when I vacationed in Srinagar, the town was busy. Adults went to work and children to school.

Those days in the seventies, there was no TV at *mātāmāl*. In any case, there was no transmission in the afternoon. And the evening TV that I watched occasionally whenever I visited my aunt at Ganpatyar, wasn't worth pining for. There were no magazines or newspapers at home. Unlike Delhi, most of Srinagar had no newsboys chucking newspapers early in the morning, or to bring me kids' magazines and comics. I wasn't into books. Certainly not in the vacations that follow the exams. There was a limit to the conversations I could have had

with the women around, who were different multiples of my age and busy with chores or resting and chatting. Radio blared in Kashmiri, hence was unintelligible and boring. Street-gazing, sitting by a *kānī* (second-floor)-window was tiring. The sight of washermen spreading *namdas* (non-woven embroidered rugs) on the railing of Alikadal bridge, lazing street dogs barking at the passing tongas, a *bhishti* carrying water in his *mashak* (a large bag made of sheep-skin slung over the back) to sprinkle the streets with, idlers sitting on the shop-ledges, plump women in their air-swollen *burkas* passing by like floating tents, and similar such sights, repeated themselves in a mind-numbing monotony. Even watching those noisy boys, generally my age but often even older, stark naked, though, holding their genitals in their left hand, in a perfunctory attempt to avoid 'exposure', running excitedly in a bunch towards the Jhelum for a splash, was funny no more. Forget stepping out. Even watching them from the *Kaeni*-window and hearing them scream their colourful expletives was risqué. Having explored every square inch of the house – attic, barn, stores, patio, dressers, firewood pile, bags of charcoal, household junk, etc. included – there was little to hold me back all day long. The feeling of being caged made me restive. One day I decided to cut loose.



The old Alikadal bridge, Srinagar

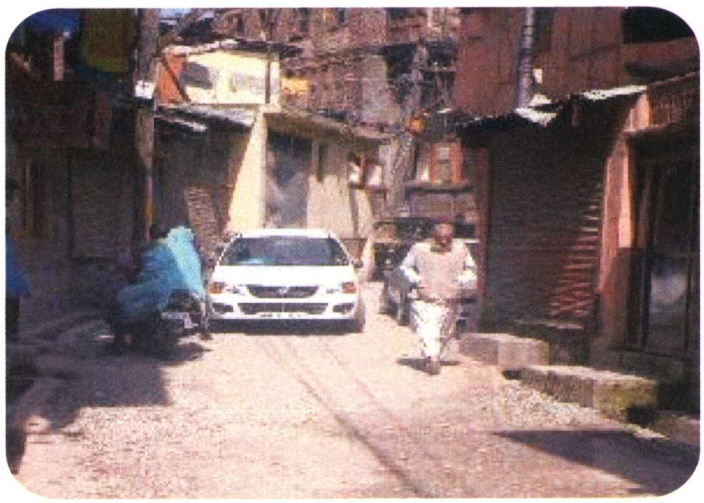
My *māmā* who worked in MES (Military Engineering Service) would always get into a frenzy every morning. At quarter past eight, while he would still be putting on his shirt or searching for his socks, his wife, *Säbā*, would take out some steaming rice on a bronze *thāl* (platter). Then she would pour some piping-hot curry, from a boiling vessel. Thereafter, she would frantically wave a hand-fan over the *thāl* to cool it. My *māmā* had the unenviable job of putting his hand into the scalding stuff, taking it to his mouth, and chewing and swallowing it. All of this in five to seven minutes. This is the time when he would start throwing a tantrum. "Too late for all this,...no point now!" And *Säbā* would plead and beseech, reeling off a long list of calamities that would befall her if he didn't listen. Kashmiri has an incredibly rich vocabulary for such occasions. My granny too would often add her bit to this hyperbole. She would, alternately, compete with her daughter-in-law in pleading with her son and chide her for always delaying her son by serving him late or, sending him half-fed. For me, the spectacle had become a daily routine. I would wonder how anyone could have a lunch-like meal so early in the morning. But, in Kashmir, that was what everyone leaving home in the morning did.

I tried using my charm on my *māmā* . The previous evening, my father went away for a couple of days. That was a major opportunity. So, when *māmā* returned from his office, I started off. "Ahem.., *māmā ji*, how far is your office from here?" "And how many people work with you?" "What do you do the whole day long?" "What is the name of your best friend there?" I wasn't paying attention to his answers. Just like what the adults would often subject me to, after firing their predictable questions at me. I found grown-ups clumsily patronizing whenever they tried to strike up a polite conversation with growing-ups like me. Here, the roles were reversed for a change. And then, when I thought I had softened him up enough, I tossed at him what I was angling for. "Will you take me along one day? I won't bother you. Promise!" It looked as if he was half expecting it. Not wanting to disappoint me, he agreed with put-on enthusiasm. But I was not going to give up so easily and he probably knew it too.

So, when my *māmā* saw me all dressed up and waiting, he was perhaps not too surprised. He did two things at once.

He called out loudly to my mother... *T äthīī*...! She was upstairs. Simultaneously, he lunged towards me to grab my arm. I had anticipated it. Before he could touch me, I was out of the door like an arrow, flying in the general direction towards *Aalikadal* - his usual route. That was my fastest ever sprint. After 20 odd yards I glanced back and saw my *māmā* outside the door looking towards me and grinning. I also saw my mom, granny, my sister and *Säbā* craning out of the various windows of the *känī* and watching me in the distance. Mom waved a few times to call me back. And then I saw *Mama* gesture to them in some kind of reassurance. I thought I had crossed my first hurdle.

Now, I had to tail my *māmā* , my reluctant escort, from a safe distance. I had no clue where he worked and how he reached there. The idea was to follow him. Follow him long enough to make it unviable for him to drop me back home. But, the quirk that I hadn't anticipated was that I was walking ahead of him, hoping that he would follow me. On earlier occasions, whenever I saw him off at the door, my gaze would follow him till he turned right and disappeared. By that memory, I knew he stepped off the road into *Woosi Saeb's* compound. I did precisely that. *Mama's* face seemed to challenge me: 'but what about the next turn, Sonny Jim'. The passage through the compound led to a narrow winding lane with small shops. The lane itself ended at the beginning of Aalikadal. I quickly cleared the lane. Turning right meant crossing the bridge. Turning left meant heading towards Maharaj Gunj and Zainakadal. Hereafter, I had no clue. I turned right and took a position about fifteen yards ahead with a clear view of the mouth of the lane. I waited here for him to emerge. This, I felt, was an opportune moment to reverse the order and start 'following' instead of 'leading'. Otherwise, I could lose him in the lanes and by-lanes. It was quite a cat and mouse situation.



The Bulbul Lankar locality, Srinagar

But as I waited, *Māmā* just wouldn't show up. It shouldn't have taken this long. I was wondering if he had turned back to take another route. I edged closer to the lane to check if there was anything amiss. I could sense nothing. My furtive looks and tentative steps fetched me some inquisitive faces. One of them was a middle-aged shopkeeper. He asked me in an extra warm tone, all but hugging me, "*Van sä mōlā, kyā gatshī* "? (Tell me, dear, what do you want?) "I am searching for someone", I said in my halting pidgin Kashmiri. "Is that him you're looking for" he asked pointing towards someone at a distance. I turned and saw my *māmā* waving at me with an ear-to-ear grin, from about 25 yards away. Before I could move, this time the middle-aged avuncular figure literally hugged me and enveloped me in his *'pheran'* (a long and loose overgarment). Resisting was futile, and the way I was being spoken to, impolite too. Thus, my adventure ended in an anti-climax. After five minutes of an inane chat with a rank stranger and a pack of Poppins (a brand of multi-coloured sugar candies) for consolation, I had the onerous task of sheepishly walking back. I dragged myself with my tail between my legs, to the same door that I had bolted from earlier, in complete defiance, with the same tail sticking up. Of course, I was in no hurry to get back. I knew what awaited me – from triumphant smirks of my mother to some irritatingly overt, placating noises from my granny to soothe my bruised ego. As I stepped back into the street from the compound of Wūsī Säb, I could see the necks still craning out of the *känī*-windows. I took all the time in the world to reach the door. This was the first time I had gone as far as I did, all by myself. The sense of freedom that I felt was unique. I wanted to prolong it. On the way, I saw every shop, looked at all that was happening and gawked at everything that moved. Once I reached the door, I decided against going in. An idea struck me: why not explore as far in the other direction as well, all by myself?

The other direction led to Navakadal, the sixth bridge. It was a relatively straight stretch with shops lined up on either side. About 25 odd yards to the right, till the Firdous Photo Studio, was a familiar view thanks to my street-gazing from the *känī* -window. The way further passed through a neighbourhood called Bulbul Lankar. I found the name funny. Nobody I asked had a clue why it had such a name. Further down on the way was a school

that always reverberated with the full-throated choruses of students repeating what their teachers said. I found it hugely amusing. I, possibly, wore a smug look whenever I passed that way. The classrooms in Delhi, where I studied, had moved on from where the pedagogy in Bulbul Lankar was still stuck. You could hear hundreds of them from near the shop of the *gūrybāy* (milkmaid) which was scores of steps away from the school. By the time I sauntered closer to the riot of choruses, some became discernible. It was often funny. More so, if you were lucky to hear a class learning anything in English. 'Six' is pronounced 'sick-us' and 'science' is turned into 'sinus'. There was no allusion to any disease here. Nor is there any etymological fetish for the imagined Greek roots of the words. As a rule, Kashmiri, when it interferes with the spoken English of its unwitting practitioners, can often turn their serious conversations into hilarious entertainment.

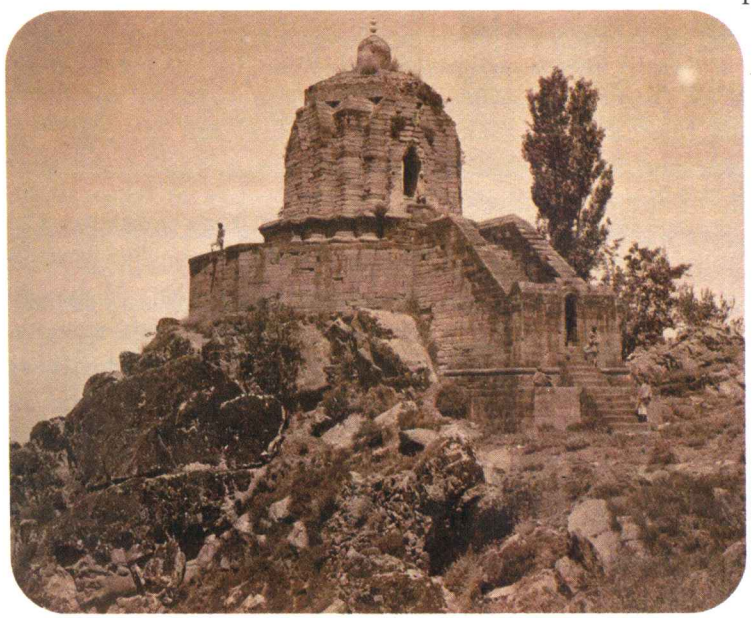
Further down from the school were a few shops that sold traditional pots and pans. Samovars, platters, cooking vessels, cups, tumblers, spatulas, large and small *degzchis*, water pitchers, hookah bowls and such wares, in copper and bronze, all dressing up the shop shelves. More than the sight of these objects of everyday use, looking like exquisite objets d'art, it was the sight of craftsmen at work that drew me. Their measured beating of the metal, with a small hammer, tinkering patterns, stopped me in my tracks. I wondered why very few passers-by looked as interested as I was. I spent some time there, just gaping at them. There were tailors and embroiderers in the adjacent shop. They would, jab their needles in and pull them back, furiously, ignoring the street in front of them and the tinkering noise from not too far. *Pherans,* with bright embroidery, hung around them in a proud display of what kept them busy. Next was a barber shop with the entire shop-front full of gaudy film posters. Inside, played a very loud radio, and one could see a few faces, lathered or waiting to be lathered. Further down were the shops that always intrigued me. They had large round platters on the counter with various shades of a sticky brown substance heaped high like an inverted cone. Those shops also had a mild lingering interesting smell about them. Every time I had passed by those shops, I would ask my mother what that stuff was. She would, invariably, find something else to talk about. Q.E.D. My mother was not a psychoanalyst, not even an amateur one. Not by a long shot. Soon, I found a cousin to tell me all about it, of course, on the condition of keeping it a secret, strictly between us. It was tobacco, sold loose for the *jajīrs* (hookahs). It came in different types. There were some fragrant varieties too. To me, it made that strange thing called hookah a little more intriguing. A few steps further and you reached the *chowk*. To the left was the decades-old wooden bridge, Navakadal. Further down was the way to Safakadal followed by *Eidgah*. The *chowk* stood studded with bright and inviting corner shops. Their shiny candy-jars, glossy cigarette-packs and colourful boxes of cookies and chocolates had a way of reminding you that some extra money in the pocket was never a bad idea. I saw a couple of tongas and a mini-bus awaiting fares. I decided to end my exploring and return. By the time I got back home, I was full of the excitement I had earlier felt in the morning. To this day, I recall it with a bit of amusement. It was, perhaps, the first time I had shed my inhibitions of walking about alone in Srinagar.

To go anywhere from Batayar at Alikadal – the fifth bridge of Srinagar – one usually walked. In the Srinagar of the seventies and eighties, a walk of half an hour to forty-five minutes, through the winding maze of narrow lanes, could take you from anywhere to wherever. Those in a hurry chose the tempos (grotesque motorized three-wheelers) and low-roof mini-buses in which most adults didn't find a place to sit or even stand straight. These, relatively new modes, ran on select routes. They ferried people – overloaded and spewing thick diesel soot with loud grunts of low gears. Commuters saw them as a huge progress. Of course there were quaint Tongas too that always looked tempting to the leisurely commuters who could afford to pay a little more. But even to catch a ride on a tempo or a minibus, from Batayar, one had to walk, either till Navakadal (the sixth bridge) or Zainakadal (the fourth bridge). But, I had begun to like walking. You soaked in a lot more of the city that way. More so, if you walked with those who knew it well and not just the shortest way to somewhere.

The soaking bit came with a caveat though. Negotiating lanes was often a challenge. One had to avoid stepping on or, worse, tripping over the unpleasant mix of slush and sewage, spread over and around the paved stones of the lane. And while you were focused, with all your senses strained, searching for a dry patch or a firm stone-slab to step on, you could be in for an equivalent of a meteorite shower from the high heavens. It used to be a common practice in downtown Srinagar to throw all the domestic refuse from the *kānī* window with a customary yell "*Hōōōssh* ". This one and a half syllable call meant a perfunctory – 'you have been warned'. If it were your lucky day, you would dust and shake the peels off and

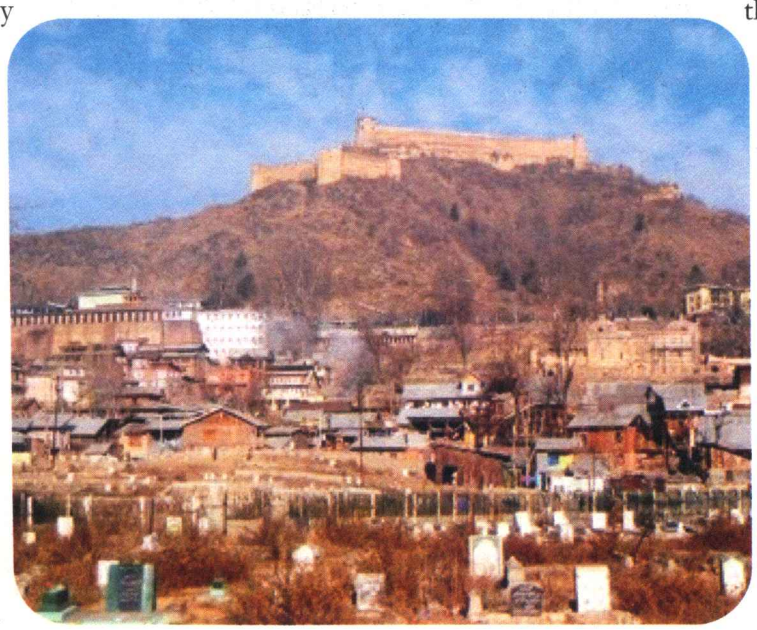
move on thanking your lord. Not so lucky ones could get drenched or hurt, often both, and left with just one recourse. Yell and scream your choicest curses to a window slammed shut on you and make a bigger spectacle.

The longer walks in Srinagar, I remember, took some planning. Two of these were hikes cum pilgrimages to very prominent landmarks. One was to a hill – Shankaracharya, and another, to a hillock – Parbat. For both, I remember, one had to start pre-dawn. My evening-before excitement about these hikes had had to compete with, and often lose to, the lazy comforts of a quilt in the wee hours. And it wasn't just leaving the warm quilt but the thought of bone chilling water one had to bathe in, moments after leaving the bed, that made me miserable. But the plan would invariably hold. On the way, my eagerness would keep me a couple of steps ahead of the rest. The lanes of Srinagar looked so different in the dark, with just the dimly lit *kāndar vān* (bakers) and street dogs for company. I must admit, those temples did not hold much charm for me, then barely 10-12 years old. The opportunity was for the sights & sounds on the way and from the summit. It was also to prove that I was grown up enough for the endurance it takes to walk, climb and return all on foot. On the way to Parbat, also known as Chakreshwar, I remember the sight of Pathar Masheed – a massive and impressive fortress like structure made of stone. Likewise, we would pass Durga Nag before beginning our ascent to Shankaracharya. The summit gave a bird's-eye view of Srinagar. After taking an eyeful, I would start my clamour to go back, this time to experience the hustle and bustle of a city just woken up.



The Shankracharya Temple

I have not walked those lanes and alleys again for the last 23 years – almost half my life so far. All these years, as my Srinagar shrugged and turned its back on me, I, like someone jilted and on a rebound, took all the opportunities to wander in every available direction, as far away as I could: along the Yera in Melbourne, Plaka and Monastiraki in Athens, Catalonia Square at Barcelona, Osaka, Nice, Shenzhen... went even candi-hopping in Jogja. But, no! Not in Srinagar. I miss those quaint houses that we all had to abandon. Houses made of hand-made bricks and mud; the weather-beaten wood of their window-frames and the embedded massive logs to hold their floors. I could, any day, trade the glass and granite facades of the pompous first world I roamed, with the magnificence of their dignified humility. I miss the *kochas* (Kashmiri for lanes) of Srinagar. Narrow and winding, wet and slippery, with all their dirt and smell, I miss them. I recall even those stretches that I so viscerally resented then, for their squalor and filth. I cannot go to Srinagar anymore let alone walk about there. I am reduced to just reminiscing. It is a poor substitute. As I miss Srinagar, I cannot help but recall what I heard on some of those numerous walks there as I grew up.



Hari Parbat

On one such walk to Ganpatyar from Alikadal with my mother, I remember coming across a shrine. Beyond Zainakadal, as you go further down towards Fatehkadal (the third bridge) through a short cut, you reach a largish

structure that has people milling about. It has the look of a holy place. My mother stopped for a moment, turned towards the shrine, covered her head with her *pallu* (open end of her *saree*), shut her eyes, folded her palms in reverence, muttered something and bowed her head slightly before moving on. I was a little intrigued. This place did not look like a temple at all. Almost everyone there was wearing a cap and a beard. I asked my mother. She gestured asking me to wait for her answer. After walking away some distance from the shrine, in a relatively less crowded stretch, I asked again. She said it was a *khānqāh*. I did not get it. I asked what was a *khānqāh*, whose was it. She said "Some *Muslim peer* I don't know who". 'So, if you don't even know his name, why do you pray there like that", I persisted. "Because, it was a *Kali Mandir* earlier", she said in a whisper as if letting me into a secret at great risk to both of us. She looked around to see if anyone had overheard her and began to walk faster. I got the message and kept my gob shut till we reached my aunt's at Ganpatyar. Once inside the house, I asked my uncle who was the Principal of a school. My mother heard me asking him and joined in on my question asking him if what she had said wasn't true. Then she further added that the image of Kali was still there behind a drape. My uncle looked at my mother with a question on his face as if asking why did she have to tell me all that. That was the end of it then. Recently I read that the place where my mother stood in reverence was indeed a temple built by Pravarsena the Second, a Hindu King, (79-130 CE) who had dedicated the shrine to Goddess Kali. Qutab-ud-Din (1373-1389 CE) usurped it and converted it into a mosque in memory of Mir Syed Ali of Hamadan (a place in Iran) who had come to the Valley to establish Islam.

The Khanaqah of Shah-e-Hamadan with a Vermilion - daubed Mahakali Image in the Foreground

Srinagar, like the rest of Kashmir, is strewn with such places. Not all places were merely snatched away. Some were zealously destroyed. One king, Sikandar, built a formidable reputation plundering and razing Hindu temples. He is remembered as *butshikan* (Persian for iconoclast). He is believed to have used even gunpowder. Not to win battles but to flatten the millennia-old magnificence of the pre-Islamic Kashmir. When he ran out of gunpowder, he got the nearby forests chopped to pile up firewood that would burn for months to bust the exquisite stone pillars of the temples. Most of the valuable debris thus harvested was then recycled to build mosques.

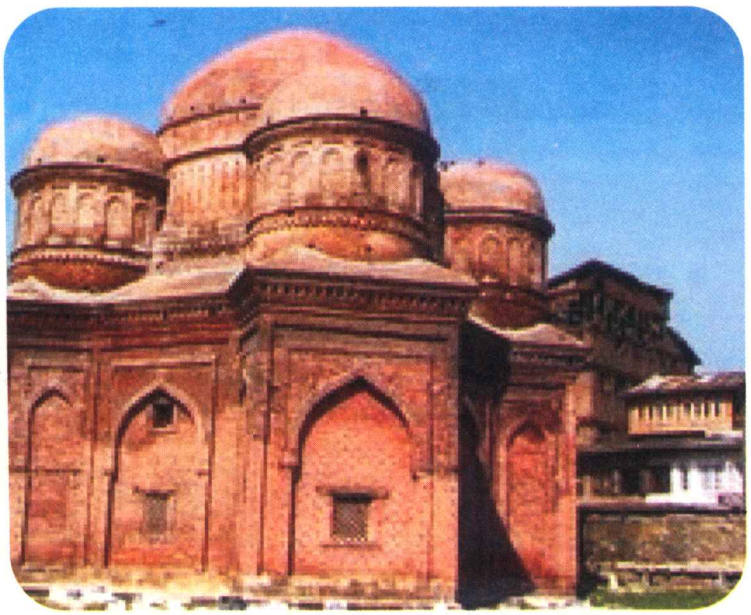
At first sight, it isn't obvious. Certainly not to someone too young to know, like me. When I saw the *ziyārat* (pilgrimage) of Peer Mohammad Basur at a place between Navakadal and Safakadal, on the way to Eidgah, I did not know that it used to be a massive Skanda Bhavan with its revered sacred springs, built during the reign of King Yudhishthira *II* (170-209 AD). Likewise, I learnt only recently that the Tribhuvan Swamin temple built by King Chandrapida (684-693 CE) was pulled down and turned into a graveyard. *Taufat-ul- Ahbab,* a Persian text recording the eye-witness account of the sacking of the *Tribhuvan Swamin* temple, describes the raid on this temple in graphic detail. It says that the pitched battle fought by the native Hindus to save their temple lasted three days. On the third night, the head priest of the temple, presumably faced with the imminent devastation, committed suicide.

What shocked me was reading about the tomb at Maharaj Gunj, whose majestic thoroughfares I often walked through on my way to Zainakadal or to buy medicines from the numerous pharmacies there. This is a tomb to the mother of the great benevolent king Zain-ul-Abidin, also called Budshah (The great king), perhaps for his generosity. He is supposed to have invited the Hindus back after they were brutally cleansed, through a royal decree, by his tyrant father Sikander Butshikan. This tomb for his mother was built with the very debris of a large temple that stood there and was razed to make space for the tomb. And it was this very Budshah who also banished Sanskrit from the courts and replaced it with

Persian. There is a bridge adjacent to Amirakadal named after Budshah as is a large government hotel at the city centre.

That funny sounding Bulbul Lanker – found out about that too. This strange-sounding name had a not-so-strange history dating back to the early 14th century. A certain Bulbul Shah, an Islamic missionary from Turkey who was earlier called Sharafuddin, ran a *langar* (community kitchen) here. It was to serve free food at the time of a famine, caused by the scorched-earth-policy of a Tartar invader, Dulchu. That was in 1319 CE. Bulbul Shah's *langar* had only one pre-condition for the starving natives – conversion to Islam. Nobody told me this till early this year.

The site of Shalimar, the famous Mogul Garden at the edge of the Dal Lake, is where Raneshwara, a magnificent temple built by King Ranaditya (414-474 CE), stood. The French traveller, Bernier, who visited Kashmir with the mogul emperor Aurangzeb, refers to his visit to the garden, saying that the doors and the pillars made of stone used at the garden were brought from some of the idol-temples in the vicinity demolished by Shah Jahan, and that it was impossible to put a value to them. I had countless picnics at Shalimar Bagh all through the seventies and eighties. No one ever breathed a word about Raneshwara.



The Tomb of Badshah's Mother at Maharajganj, Srinagar

Even the *pheran,* which is so Kashmiri for the entire world, to my huge disappointment, is not so Kashmiri after all. This too is a Persian import and a distortion of the Persian word '*pairahan*'. There is a sordid story about *pheran* too. When Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) took to wearing *pherans,* to avoid trouble by blending with the Muslims, they were ordered by the rulers not to dress like Muslims. Much later, when they were permitted *pherans,* they were not allowed to embroider their *pherans.* They had to wear plain bland ones. This distinguished the KPs form the Kashmiri Muslims (KMs). The Pathans took it to another level. They would sit on the shoulders of the KPs, put their feet in the pockets of the *pherans* of the KPs and ride them like they would ride a pony. It is another matter that some Pathans, in their contempt for Kashmiris in general, did the same to the KMs as well.

All this is very different from what I was taught and told about Kashmir. In fact, the popular tales about Kashmir are keyed to *Kashmiriyat.* "The centuries-old amity between the faiths in Kashmir thanks to a tolerant Sufi Islam" is their recurring theme. Tourism brochures and history textbooks peddle it alike.

It is not strange to be a 'well read' Kashmiri and know next to nothing about this incessant mayhem over the centuries. Nor is it strange to see the Kashmiris who know better, play down or, worse, deny the blood and gore their preceding generations waded through. I wonder why. Most KMs I've met accept, unequivocally, that their ancestors were KPs. But it is rare, if at all, to find a KM admitting to tyranny as the cause of conversion of their ancestors.

But what is difficult to understand is the indifference of the KPs. More inexplicable is the denial a huge many of them still live in. Victims seldom deny the atrocities they bear as the KPs do. I often meet such KPs who, even while living in exile for over two decades, in all sincerity, marvel about *Kashmiriyat* and "the centuries-old amity between the faiths in Kashmir thanks to a tolerant Sufi Islam". Such is their conditioning that they prefer to be moved by the couplets of Shams Faqir and borrowed mysticism of Sheikh Noor-ud-din. Not by the fact that in less than 500 years of this Sufi *Kashmiriyat,* Hindus, from almost a hundred percent population in the Valley, dwindled to single digits by the early 19th century and today are barely in the third decimal place.

Deracinated KPs are not rare. Nor are they intellectually challenged. On the contrary, they are often the examples of academic brilliance and professional excellence among

the community. I sometimes wonder if they would ever realize what atrocious miseries their ancestors bore for them to be a KP today. To convert was the easiest way out for their ancestors. The glacial apathy of these KPs would thaw. If only they allowed themselves the warm illuminating glow of Shrivara's Rajatarangini. Then, they might also begin to see that the medieval campaign of usurping an entire civilization is not done with them as yet. After a near complete demographic subsumption of Kashmir, even the traces of pre-Islamic life in Kashmir are sought to be erased.

The ancient Shankaracharya temple, overlooking the city from a hill-top that I so eagerly would climb, was built by King Gopaditya (328-308 BC), almost a thousand years before Islam was born. The hill was called Gopadari. The road below, where the Chief Minister has his official residence, is called Gupkar Road. Now, there is an official signboard near the Shankaracharya temple proclaiming that it 'also called' Takht-e-Suleiman. Obviously, the successive 'secular' governments are colluding in the effort. Much before the invention of Takht-e-Suleiman, Noorjehan, wife of the Mogul emperor Jahangir, had hundreds of large stone-blocks removed from what formed the steps, rising from the Jhelum below right up to the temple on the hill-top. What did she do with them? She got them hauled to build that massive Pathar Masjid, the same fortress like structure on the way to Parbat. Lore has it that when asked how much was spent on building the Pathar Masjid, she is supposed to have retorted "less than the cost of my footwear". This so ragged the clergy that they forbade praying in that mosque.

The Pathar Masjid, Srinagar

That same hillock called Parbat, another of my fovourite hikes, has a place of pilgrimage of immense reverence for Hindus – Chakreshwar. It was deliberately surrounded over the years and is, now, almost usurped by creeping graveyards, shops and houses. Even this was renamed as Koh-e-Maran. Vicharnag, a holy place for pilgrimage and an annual fair to mark the New Year day among Hindus in now called Firdous. Over fifty years ago when some began calling Anantanag by another name – Islamabad, most thought it was a fetish of a mere fringe.

Not just the big landmarks, a humble culvert of a bridge connecting Ganpatyar with Maisuma was Gavkadal for as long as anybody can remember. It is now called Madina Chowk. The evidence is there, at every bend, at every crossing and at every bridge. Srinagar itself is almost 2400 years old. Emperor Ashoka, who ruled over his empire stretching up to present day Iran, is supposed to have built Srinagar. Now, the very name of Srinagar is sought to be changed to Shehar-e-Khas. The new name is already in circulation, informally.

I am in my forties, and my groping through the ruins of this crumbling heritage has begun recently. I can see it strewn all around me. It is not 'some' civilisation wrecked. I am the wreckage. I know, the Srinagar I so fondly long for will soon be just a memory. Nobody seems paranoid. I do not see anyone even begin working at our survival as Kashmiris. It isn't as though nothing at all is happening. A very dear friend, bright and happening, who was born in Srinagar in the early seventies, in a conversation, shared a very intimate fact. He said that he and his younger brother had undergone circumcision when they were young. Their father felt that it might help them escape when the crunch comes. They were, incidentally, among the rich & famous, and therefore, presumably, a source of assurance to the less fortunate KPs.

Can we do something? Forget doing, can we think beyond *roganjosh*? Seriously, haven't we lost our way?

**Brahmrāchōk*: A name in Kashmiri for the spirit that leads astray. The closest equivalent in English is Will-o' the-wisp

Short story

THE HILL

Hari Krishen Koul
Translated from the Kashmiri into English by
Arvind Gigoo

Hari Krishna Kaul (1934 – 2008) was one of the most eminent and admired short story writers in Kashmiri. Switching over from Hindi in 1967 with one of his most popular short stories *Taaph*, he portrayed social realities of Kashmiri life in an idiom uniquely his own. Kaul was awarded the Sahitya Akademi award his for outstanding contribution to Kashmiri literature.

I wonder what tree is this! My head is in its shade but my body is sun-blanched. The sun is sweetly warm today, more so when the shade of the umbrella is soothing my head. I feel, as though on a cold wintry day, I were washing up in warm waters, I look at the peak in front of me. Maybe that is Zabarwan, A fluff of cloud is playing hide-and-seek with the peak throwing up to make numerous delightful skyscapes of light and shade. But all are familiar. From far away fly the soft notes of a film song. The tune is familiar but I can not call up the song. Where can have the two chaps gone who got me here? Is that curly-haired boy the one who lovingly told Muni, "That mole on your face has made me a captive."? I asked her, "Who was he?" "He is known to your friend", She replied. "Which friend?" This she could not tell, Why not ask him, "Hey, mister, who are you ?" But if he says he is so-and-so ! What then? Why not ask him, "Are you the person who told me that you like the mole on her face?" I will tell him, "Mister, don't have any fears. Decide whatever you like to do with Muni, and inform me afterwards. I won't object. My worry will be over. But, Mister, tell me, does the mole alone attract you? How about her gait? Have you never seen her creamy breasts? Boys like you behave foolish. You are attracted by faces alone. Well, my dear, I suggest that you have a word with her." Down there some kind of construction is going on. Perhaps, a government hotel is being shaped. Well, this is what they call development They have found work for quite a few of fbe jobless. I am sure there are structures of this type coming up at a dozen odd places like Jawahar Nagar, Raj Bagh, Bucchwara, Barzulla and so on. This is technological age. An age of Remote Control. Push a button here and you get a type-written sheet of paper at Delhi or Calcutta or London... The cloud around the peak is darkening. That day the sky was overcast The waters of the Ganges were flowing in ecstasy. On the sandy bank of the river the maimed – both men and women wearing yellow rags – were shivering due to cold. With a heavy heart I left. At the end of the bank there were sand - stone steps and lanes too. Pretty cows with milkful teats and tinkling small bells dangling from their necks were sauntering through a lane. It was the 15th of August the day before. The people had been joyfully proud since the morning. By 1pm they jostled to browse the newspapers that made them sad. They tore away their lottery tickets for none carried any prize. But soon the same persons will buy fresh tickets only to be torn and thrown away. And then more tickets and more.... I had been a ninny. I wouldn't let Muni eat too much of tamarind. But had she eaten some in stealth, the curly-haired boy wouldn't have fallen for her. The mole on the chin or below the parting of the hair is only an excuse. It has no value. When the injection relieved her of pain she looked around.Seven or eight persons were around the cot she lay on. Her daughters were crying and their children seemed to be petrified. At last the husband stood up and resting his palm on her head said. " Remember God!" She wept and begged of him, "What has the doctor said? Am I a hopeless case? Am I to die? Do tell me the truth." The husband said, "Why fear even if that is

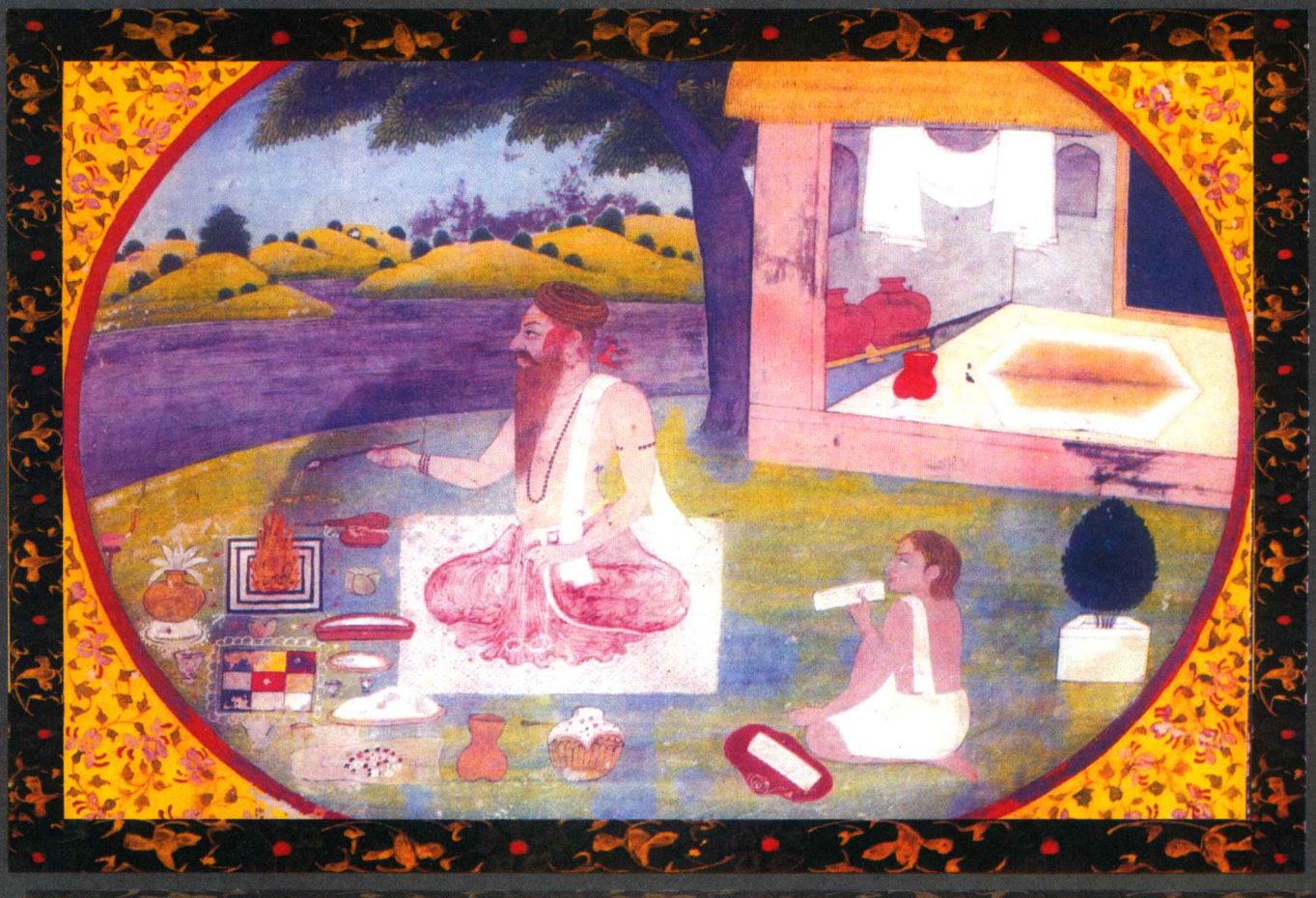
so! You have done your task.. Remember God since you are a believer. Wouldn't you pray for hours together? It is better to implore God," "Damn God!", she beat her forehead, "Why did the cruel God give me this illness? What wrong had I done Him. I won't remember him. I won't..." The red car sailed through the gate and stopped with a couple of proud jerks, near the entrance of the hall. He stepped out of the car and the people standing there greeted him. The ladies dropped a courtesy. He gave a smile to all Hindus and Muslims. He was a successful writer and great too! The best of all the writers in the country! He had even very recently been given some cash awards. The moment he stepped into the hall he was garlanded. All those seated stood up clapping in veneration. The President with a smile on his face held him in a warm embrace. And then he spoke : "A writer should dedicate himself to the toiling masses and write for their uplift. His writings should mirror their aspirations and longings. A writer should be the voice of the poor and the downtrodden. He should along with the workers of the world war against capitalism and feudalism. He must live and die for the poor... I mean the suffering and the exploited"... I blushed to the roots of my hair. Beads of perspiration trickled down my face. My ear-lobes became red-hot. Shameless hypocrisy! I wished the earth had cleaved to shelter me.

Late Prof. Hari Krishen Koul

When I was a boy, father, one day, took me to the hill A big rock had been painted vermilion. The rock looked like a hilloek. It seemed to have spread its roots. Father said, "This is the great Lord Ganesh." Amid a throng a zealous devotees praying loudly with eyes shut I bowed.. They would punctuate the hymns with a swell of tide, "O Lord Ganesh, show us your form." Shrunken and trembling I thought, "What will happen if Ganesh listens to their prayers? He will emerge forth! How? This rock will splay and come to life. Maybe, I shall be terrified." But those devotees had no such fears. They knew that Lord Ganesh wouldn't show them his form and that the stone would never come to life. Which is why they were praying to Him for a *darshan*. Since that day I have never dared go to the hill. I am convinced that the prayers of those devotees won't go waste. Lord Ganesh, moved by their call, will surely give them a *darshan*. The rock will shake and the roof and walls of the temple crumble and fall. The devotees may be saved but the people like me will be trampled over. What a wonderful thing it will be if Muni marries the curly-haired boy! If that doesn't happen! What then? I shall make Muni understand that he is not the only handsome boy. Let her take anyone she likes for a husband. In Kashmir there is no dearth of men. She should like someone... curly-haired or bald. Let alone liking or disliking. She has to live with some one and adapt herself to his rhythm. There is no other way out, otherwise she should strike her head against a stonewall. The result! The wall stays as it is; the head gets shattered. Yesterday there was a meeting of teachers, scholars and thinkers. A heated discussion took place at the lively meeting. At the end the Secretary stood up and spoke with vehemence, "What a false allegation that we embezzled money! It is a calculated move to malign us and to create panic and fear in the people who feel joyous over the nationalization of banks. The whole plan reeks some foul game. I assure you all that nobody has misused money. Moreover, how much money did we have? Each person had paid five rupees. The total amount came to one thousand and five hundred rupees. But does anyone have any idea of the money that was spent on the tea that you had last month? I will give you the details of the account right now. Twenty kilograms of sugar at the rate of two rupees a kilo..... That makes forty rupees. Right! Three hundred *kabab*s at the rate of one rupee and fifty paisa a *kabab* it means four hundred and fifty rupees. We bought fifty kilograms of *pakora*s for... I get a strange eerie feeling travelling by a tonga from Zaina Kadal to Amira Kadal. I find the hill in front of me. Peaking over rooftops and houses it chases me. It shadows me. It keeps pace with the tonga. Why? Why? I try my best to be far away from it. But it doesn't let me alone. Narinder said, "I have given up smoking." I was surprised. He said, "Look here, smoking causes lung cancer. Who would like to have this dreadful disease! I, I don't wan't to die. I love life." After a fortnight he fell ill and died in hospital. His disease remained a mystery. The day had advanced and the sun run its course. The sunshine started veiling my face. I splayed my arms, stood up and sat down again facing the other side. In front of me was the Da! Lake and beyond it the hill From a distance I heard the notes of a film song. A familiar tune but couldn't call up the song !

PAINTINGS OF PANDIT TOTARAM NAQASH

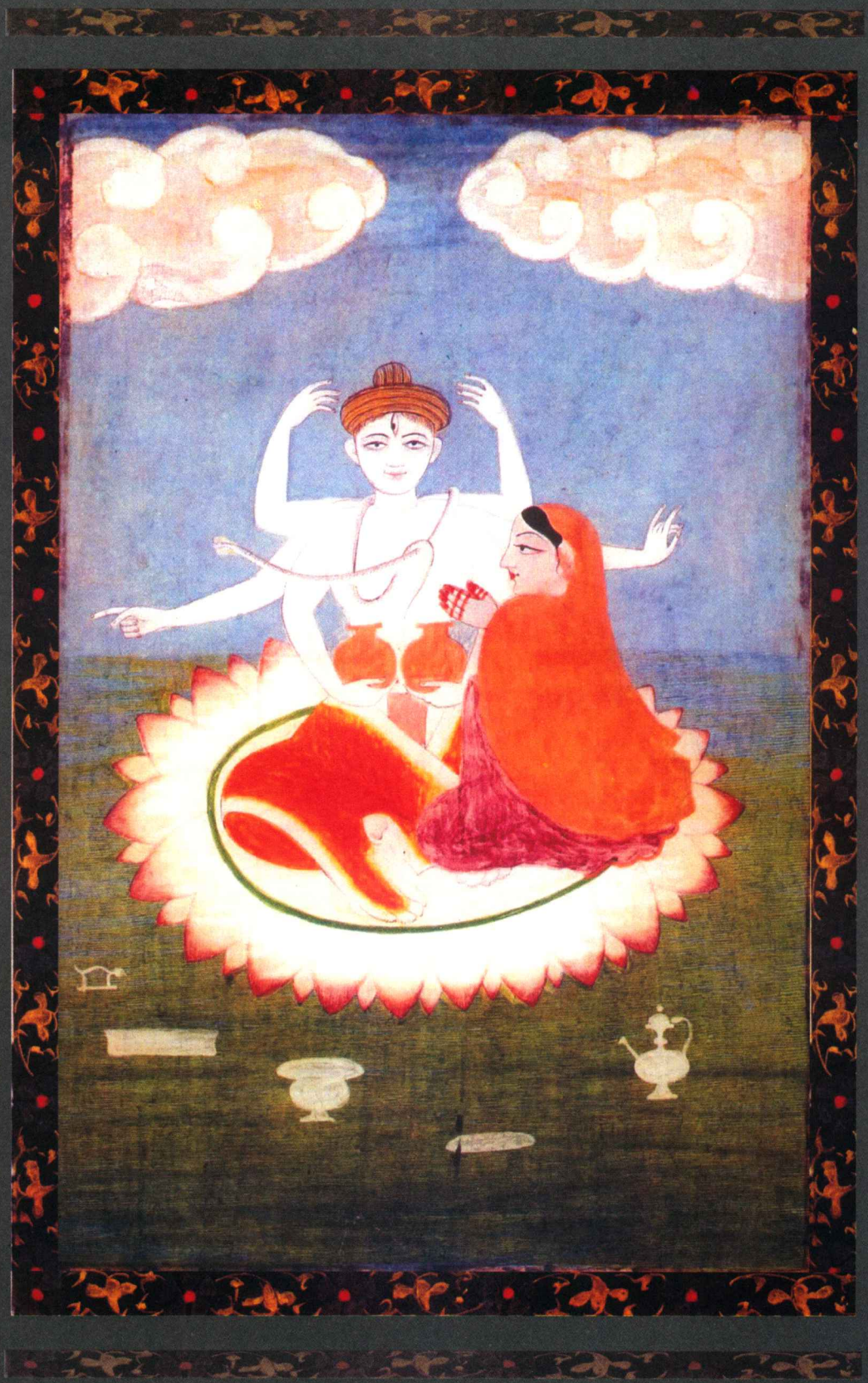
Pandit Totaram Naqash was a master painter of Kashmiri miniatures who lived in Lahore in the mid-19th century. While not much is known about his life, nine of his paintings are preserved as family heirlooms in the collection of Shri Santosh Kumar Gurtu, grandson of Pt. Mukund Ram Gurtoo who was married to Pt. Totaram Naqash's sister and was founder of the Mitra Vilas Press and Akhbar-e-Aaam, Lahore. Shri Santosh Kumar Gurtoo lives presently at New Delhi and these paintings were retrieved by him from a burning house, during the terrible communal conflagration that engulfed Lahore in July 1947, preceding Partition. They now adorn his study and have also been printed by him in the form of an album. Though the paintings, executed probably between the years 1860 and 1880, stylistically belong to the Kashmir School of miniature painting, they bear an unmistakable stamp of the artist's personality, reflecting his imagination, originality and artistic genius. What distinguishes them, apart from Naqash's innovative skill and his sense of religious dedication, is that their themes are intimately related to Kashmiri religious traditions and evoke a strong local flavour. The paintings draw upon the legends given in the Bhringish Samhita, a Sanskrit text describing the *mahatmya* (glory) of Kashmiri places of pilgrimage and worship of gods and goddesses. The paintings that depict Ganga flowing in five streams from the matted locks of Lord Shiva at Panchatarini and Lord Vishnu reclining on the divine serpent at Sheshnag, two important places on the pilgrimage route to Amarnath, the painting showing gods paying tribute to Goddess Sharika and the one showing Shiva and Parvati with the *vatuka* pitchers related to the Shivaratri festival of Kashmiri Pandits are works of particular interest. Of the nine paintings, seven are reproduced here.



The Guru performing yajna and the shishya reciting from the Veda

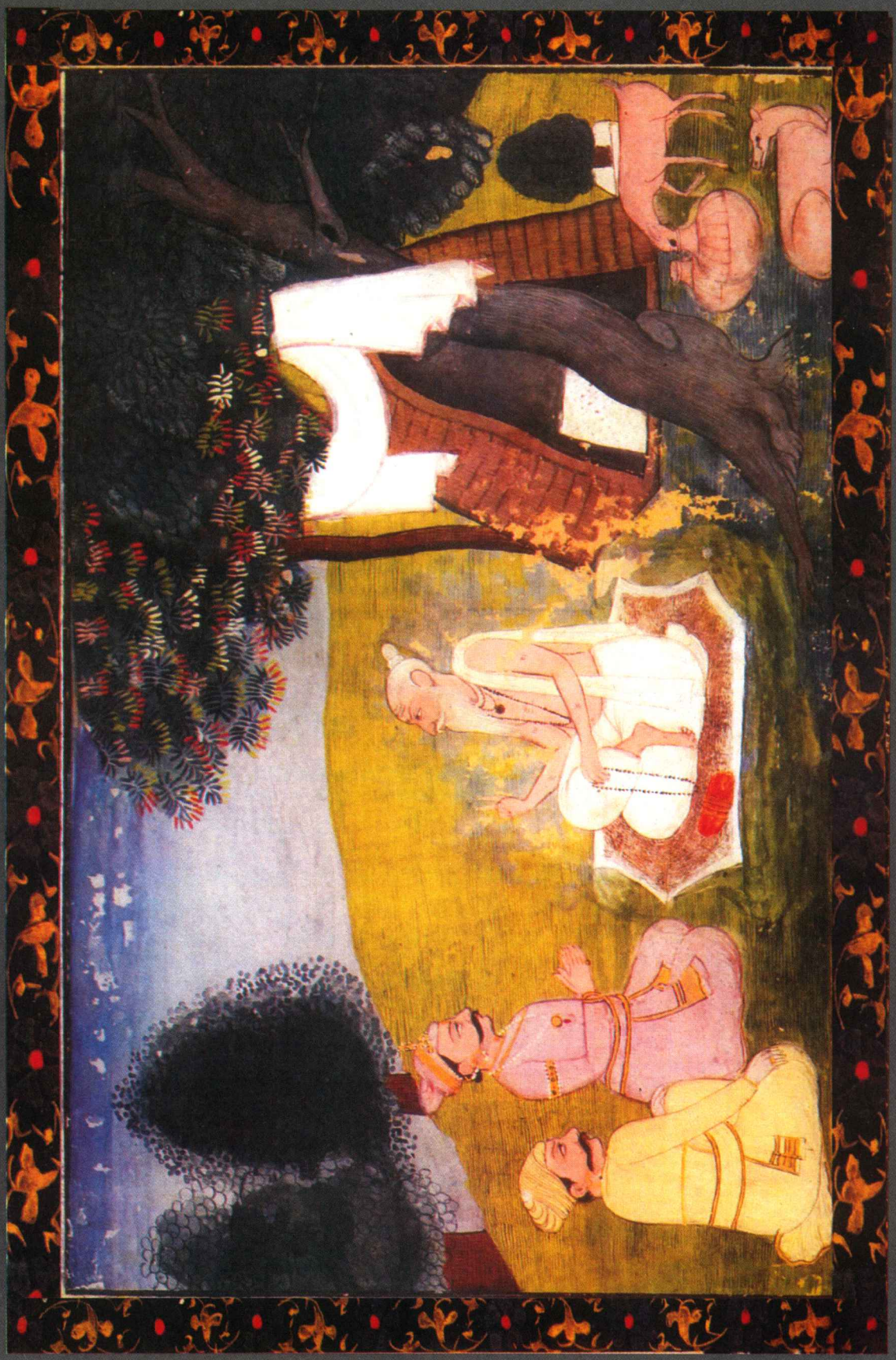
Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh and the nine grahas invoking the blessings of Sharika Bhagwati, the presiding deity of Kashmir.

Panchatarini, the last halt before the Amar Nath Cave



Six-handed Shiva and Parvati with the vatuka pitchers, on Herath (Shivaratri)

Rishi Markandeya giving a sermon to a devotee



Rishi Markandeya explaining the fundamentals of dharma to a king

Vishnu at the Sheshnag Lake, the halt before Panchatarini on the way to the Amar Nath Cave

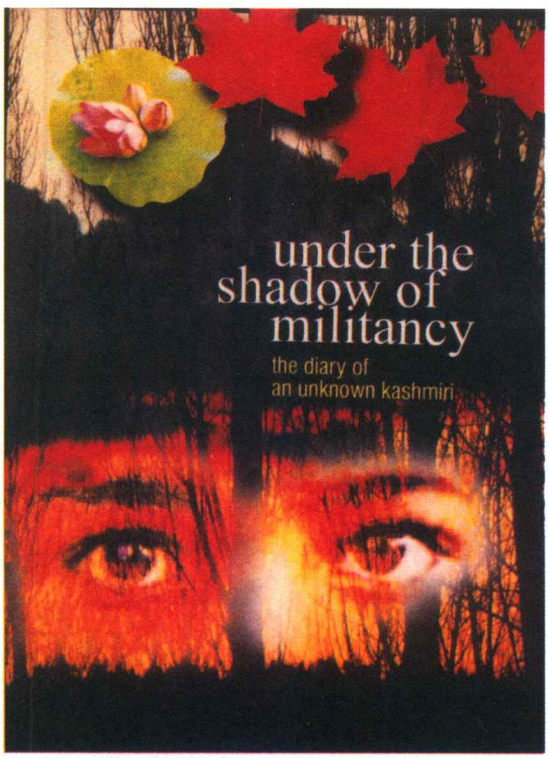
Excerpt

Under the Shadow of Militancy:
The diary of an unknown Kashmiri

Excerpts from Tej Nath Dhar's novel

The novel tells the horror story of eruption of terrorist violence in the Kashmir valley in early 1990 when Kashmiri Pandits were targeted and subjected to brutal killings and atrocities. It is in the form of a diary written by an "unknown" Kashmiri Pandit who lived under the shadow of death in that crucial period in Kashmir's recent history and gives a harrowing account of the circumstances in which the members of his community were forced to flee en masse from their native land. First published by Rupa in 2002, the novel was reprinted in 2004. It has been translated into Marathi by Sujata Deshmukh under the title '*Dahshatichya Chhayet Diary: Eka Kashmiri Anamikachi*'.

What transpired at Sunil's place is an incident of high drama, marked by violent emotional turns and bumps in people's expectations. It also brought to the fore a particular kind of mentality, which is also the mentality of a large number of Muslims who are in actual control of affairs in the Valley. I wish I could reproduce what happened in the meeting in Sunil's inimitable narrative style, with all those flourishes of humour and suspense, which he so adroitly dramatized before me in my room. Mine is at best a poor, second-hand version. When Sonahjoo knocked at his door in the late evening, Sunil woke up with a start. He had just fallen asleep after speaking to his brethren about what had transpired at his place, and the various possibilities that his visit could open for them. Sonahjoo walked in along with a sizable group of people, representing a wide cross-section of the village Muslim population. After welcoming them to his large living room, Sunil requested Sonahjoo to allow him to get a few of his close neighbours to attend the meeting. So the Pandits too walked in. When word went around, many more rushed in. Because all of them could not be accommodated there, some were forced to stand near the door; others perched on the windowsills, and many others, to Sunil's discomfort, had to wait outside. All of them wanted to be there because they were keen on knowing what chances they had of staying on in their homes. The meeting was indeed crucial for their future in the village.



Since his mother, like so many other Pandit women of the village, was already in Jammu, Sunil told his Muslim friends that he could not offer them tea or any hot drink, only cigarettes. And cigarettes they gladly accepted.

Sonahjoo began his address somewhat hesitantly, for he fretted and fumbled for words for a few minutes, creating awkward moments,

which everybody noticed. But soon, he spoke with clarity and confidence, and in a measured tone, delivering what people later called a perfectly correct political speech, though much of its impact was blown away by another speech, which followed his.

Almost in the nature of a prelude to the problem at hand, he dwelt at length on the tradition of mutual respect among the Muslims and Pandits and the long history of their happy coexistence in the village. Then in a somewhat veiled manner, he spoke about the nature of the current crisis, which, in a roundabout way, he described as the expression of dissatisfaction among the people of the Valley with the existing political arrangement.

Though he did not make any open reference to the communal overtones of the movement, he stressed the need for mutual togetherness of the two communities in this hour of trial. He also dwelt on the responsibility of the good Muslims towards the Pandits, because, even according to the tenets of Islam, they were enjoined to protect their neighbours from harm. Seeing that members of both communities heard him with respect, he stated boldly that the Pandits had no need to fear for their lives. The people who had pelted stones on the roofs of their houses were mischief-mongers, who had not only created bad blood between the two communities but also sullied the good name and reputation of the village. Their action deserved to be condemned in the strongest possible terms. It almost emerged as a kind of climactic pronouncement, intended to set at rest whatever fears the Pandits had experienced since the previous evening.

"I want the Pandits to know that their life with us is a part of this bogey of mutual coexistence, which has no basis whatsoever in our lexicon. The Muslims have no obligation towards them. However, they can rely on our generosity, avail of our *tahafuz*, and live like second class citizens. That is their only hope."

Sonahjoo's words, spoken as they were in a firm tone, led to the easing of tension in the room. The Pandits had a new light in their eyes. The exchange of slow whispers among them indicated signs of relief. Every face in the room looked relaxed. Everyone thought that the meeting was about to end.

Looking particularly pleased with himself, Sonahjoo asked Sunil for another cigarette. So a brief pause followed. After lighting it, he looked like making a final declarative statement, when a young, educated Pir, who taught in the neighbouring government school, sought permission to express his views on this important occasion.

This unexpected intrusion sounded somewhat out of character with the general mood of the evening, but hoping that it would be no more than an endorsement of what had quietly been accepted by then, Sonahjoo declared in an expansive manner that everyone was free to say whatever he wanted. Judging from what actually happened, Sonahjoo could not have bargained for this in his wildest dreams.

The Pir provided a blow-by-blow refutation of what Sonahjoo had so assiduously built as a positive gain of the meeting. Without mincing words, and with unflinching clarity, he destroyed the basis of Sonahjoo's thesis of the mutual coexistence of the two communities. Quoting a verse from the Koran, he repudiated the idea of Hindu-Muslim bhai bhai, and called secularism a hollow principle, which had no place in Islam, though it had been espoused and advocated in Kashmir by leaders of all hues. It was only a sham, a tactical ploy, used by them to win elections and to keep themselves in power. The idea of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood was just a slogan, used by the politicians of the state for their selfish ends, and, therefore, a big lie that people had been made to swallow for too long. The fact was that Pandits were *kafir*s, who had nothing in common with the Muslims. He pointedly said that he recognized no constitution, no government, and no authority, except the one that was enshrined in the Koran. The main cause of the present trouble, in fact, was the denial of this reality, and the consequent injustice meted out to the Muslims of Kashmir.

Sunil's narration of this part of the meeting was superb. Sonahjoo's face shrank to the size of his palm; the cigarette between his fingers turned quietly into one of ash. Everyone looked stunned. Time no longer seemed like ticking. Everything in *the* room was frozen, standstill. It was only when Sonahjoo's finger got scorched by the last bit of the burning cigarette, which drew a low moan

from him, that there was an uneasy stir in *the* room, and everyone woke up to find where he was. Taking advantage of this, the Pir made his final, clinching pronouncement: "I want the Pandits to know that their life with us is a part of this bogey of mutual coexistence, which has no basis whatsoever in our lexicon. The Muslims have no obligation towards them. However, they can rely on our generosity, avail of our *tahafuz*, and live like second class citizens. That is their only hope."

Sunil had been watching carefully the changing character of the meeting. The peasants had no match for the erudition of the Pir. By sprinkling his talk with quotations from the Koran, which he recited with his impeccable enunciation, he had overawed them completely. With a quivering voice of high emotional vibrancy, he had brought Sonahjoo and his cohorts to the lowest level of submission.

Sonahjoo looked paralyzed and without any clue about how to save the situation from ending disastrously. He stood up to say something, but he was hardly intelligible, and the people did not seem prepared to listen to anything. It was quite obvious that the Pir had left him without any chance of re-establishing his credibility. Many others, who had come with Sonahjoo, were totally confused, and not sure of what to do or how to react.

Today Mohinder rushed in to tell me, in a very alarming tone, that I have become too visible and vulnerable. It surprised me because, except for yesterday, when I went out after weeks, I have rarely moved out of my house and hardly seen any people.

Seeing that the meeting had been thrown into an awkward confusion, and that the suspense was becoming unbearable, Sunil showed remarkable courage, and took control of the situation. He told the Muslims that he was thankful to them, particularly to the Pir, for making the Pandits aware of their true position, but asserted that he was not willing to stay in the village at their mercy, and would advise his brethren to rethink their decision to stay. At this point, some of Sonahjoo's close associates tried to persuade him not to announce drastic decisions in a hurry, though all of them looked visibly eager to leave the room. Without paying attention to what they were trying to say, much of which was lost in the noise that was getting louder and louder, he virtually dispersed the meeting. He thanked all of them, shook hands with everybody, including the Pir, who was at one time his best student. When Sunil hugged him, the Pir, with a fierce glint in his eyes, stood unmoved.

Sunil gave me many more interesting details about the content of the Pir's oration. It was quite apparent that he had come fully prepared to strike at the old guard, and to assert his position at an appropriate moment. Considering that he rendered all other Muslims speechless, it became sufficiently clear that the viewpoint of the Pir dominated the Muslim thinking at this time. The hard-liners in the movement had taken over from the ones who had visualized some hope for the old order, in which the Pandits formed a part of the socio-political system. The Pir spoke vehemently against all the older leaders of Kashmir, without naming them in particular, for their selfishness, and their lack of respect for the faith. Quite significantly, he spoke approvingly of Gilani who, as an elected member of the Legislative Assembly of the state from the Jamai-t-Islami party once quoted a verse from the Koran right on the floor of the House to prove how the secular ideal was a falsity legitimized by politicians in the name of Muslim brotherhood.

I am not sure whether Gilani or the Pir truly represent the Muslim view, although in the context of what is happening now, it looks like they do. But it is very different from my experience with the Muslims in the past, which has been quite pleasant. It never occurred to me then that the Muslim position was one of hostility towards the Pandits. That is why I find it difficult to understand this changed position. Is it the effect of the new doctrinaire approach to religion that has come from the Middle East? I firmly believe that true religion cannot impede the growth of vital, meaningful human relationships. That is what it was like in my past. Even if it was a lie, though I am not sure of that, it was beautiful and pleasant.

Today Mohinder rushed in to tell me, in a very alarming tone, that I have become too visible and vulnerable. It surprised me because, except for yesterday, when I went out after weeks, I have rarely moved out of my house and hardly seen any people. An old friend, one of the earliest acquaintances I made in this new place, supplies me with

milk and vegetables, which keep me going, and I am spared the need for moving out on the road to buy things on my own. I am pretty certain that many of my friends and acquaintances are not even aware of my being in the city. I told these things to Mohinder to convince him that his fear was baseless and unfounded. But he was in no mood to listen to me, for he had come with a made-up mind.

In a very sombre tone he said that the people who mattered knew that I was here. They had complete information about my movements; they even knew the number of times I had gone out of my home and the people I had talked with. This really was scary. He said the militants have an extensive network of spies, who do not look like spies. For the person who gives me my daily milk or the person with whom I talk in confidence could also be an informer. He may have nothing against me; he may not even wish me ill or see me come to harm, but this does not prevent him from undertaking the work of gathering information about me and my activities, which he considers a responsibility he owes to his people. In fact, this is how he combines business with duty. Thus, my milkman serves me, his customer of long standing as well as his community. It raises him above suspicion and makes him an effective informer. This, I felt, was truly astounding!

Mohinder said that there were scores of people like my milkman, people who worked in government offices, private organisations, and even those who did the meanest of private iobs. I suddenly realised that maybe my colleagues and friends too have an obligation to meet: to inform the appropriate groups about my movements, even about my opinions on current politics. When I told Mohinder that I could hardly pose any threat to any person, he said nothing in response. He, however, said that keeping track of the Pandits and their movements was a policy adopted by the people in charge of affairs because they did not favour taking risks with anybody. Then he gave me an example that was really stunning.

In one locality of the city, there lived an old Pandit couple. Because their children lived outside the state, they decided to leave the city for good. But they wanted to leave only after selling their house, which, under the present circumstances, was almost impossible. The old man broached the subject to his retired Muslim friend and colleague who visited them almost everyday He undertook to help them find a buyer. When he spoke to his wife about it, she suggested that they buy it for their daughter, to which he readily agreed.

Next day, he met the Pandits in their home, and conveyed his decision to buy it for his daughter, which made them happy. It so happened that while they were talking about it in the porch of their house, a woman who came to pluck grass and weeds from their garden for her cow was busy with her job. Since she was a daily visitor, they were not even conscious of her presence. The deal was finalised and they worked out the mode of payment that would not attract attention. Both of them knew that it was risky to sell or buy Pandit property.

They made it clear to him that the house of his friend was already his because the Pandit would be forced to leave the place without selling it. So there was no need to acquire it through a bargain.

A day after this, the friend of the Pandits, a very respectable member of the community, was visited by a small group of Muslims. In one voice and with appropriate loudness, they criticised him severely for acting against the interests of the movement, and reminded him that in this hour of trial he was not to think of petty private interests, but the larger interest of the community. They made it clear to him that the house of his friend was already his because the Pandit would be forced to leave the place without selling it. So there was no need to acquire it through a bargain.

Next day, he told his Pandit friend to forget about selling the house and to prepare for his departure instead because he had already attracted the attention of the militants, which did not augur well for him. When they tried to figure out how anybody could have known about what they talked in their house, they remembered the woman in the garden.

After hearing this story, I saw the prison walls closing on me. The images of all the people I had met and talked with during the past two weeks flashed past me. I tried hard to remember if I had said anything against anybody

or commented on any situation or incident which could be construed as an affront and invite retaliatory action, but nothing came to my mind. I told Mohinder that I had neither done nor spoken anything against the de facto power structures. He just laughed. The militants, he told me humorously, were under no obligation to investigate charges against me for getting rid of me. I could be liquidated even on grounds of suspicion. Before I could respond to this frightful prospect, he spoke to me about what his aunt had overheard near the milk vendor's shop.

The milk vendor's shop was always crowded with people waiting for their turn because its owner Rahmana had built a reputation for selling unadulterated milk, a rarity in the city. As one of his esteemed customers, Mohinder's aunt received special treatment from him. He often requested other customers to make way for her to reduce her waiting time. That particular day, when she was near the shop, she overheard people talking about the diminishing number of Pandits in the locality. One person in the group observed that one Pandit was still there in the farthest corner of the locality. Mohinder's aunt understood that it was a reference to me. When somebody else intervened to say that he was a gentleman and incapable of harm, he was severely reprimanded by another one, who looked like the leader of the group. He said that in these times, every person, gentleman or no gentleman, was a potential enemy, and they needed to keep a watchful eye on him. This led to an animated discussion, in which they discussed the cases of several gentleman Pandits who, to use their colourful phraseology, had already been sent to their heavenly abode. As if to assure themselves, all of them agreed that the solitary Pandit posed no threat; he was a blank cheque that they could cash whenever they needed. Upon hearing this, Mohinder's aunt had rushed to his place to tell him what she had heard, and to urge me that the time for my departure had finally come.

For a moment, I felt the noose tightening around my neck. But the very next moment, I remembered my grandmother and her theory of malignant stars. I told Mohinder that if my days were really numbered, then death would overtake me anywhere, here or at any other place. Here I would die by a bullet; in Jammu, I could die of heatstroke, like my uncle, or of snakebite, like the cousin of my friend. Mohinder glared at me in bewilderment. Had I succeeded in silencing him? For the time being, perhaps, I had. Fatalism has its uses, I realised. Am I really in danger? Do I need to fear for my life? Should I take Mohinder's warning seriously? I remembered my doctor-friend. He prompdy complied with the wishes of his tormentors. Like him, a number of Pandits and their families left their homes because their Muslim friends urged them to leave; they feared for their lives. When the Pandits left, the very same people criticized them openly for leaving their homes. What was this? Concern, expediency, or treachery?

Like him, a number of Pandits and their families left their homes because their Muslim friends urged them to leave; they feared for their lives. When the Pandits left, the very same people criticized them openly for leaving their homes. What was this? Concern, expediency, or treachery?

It is difficult to find a satisfactory answer. But I do remember the day when one of my Muslim friends felt worried because I greeted him on the road. Later, when we were safe from public gaze, he requested me not to speak to him in the presence of other people. He also said that I should try to understand the gravity of the situation. Any link with a Pandit could spell danger for him and his family

This new knowledge is too painful. Have we already become dreadful monsters whose touch can threaten lives, or untouchables who should be shunned? .

Comment

Twenty Years in Exile

Perspectives on contemporary 'migrant' writing by Kashmiri Pandits

Siddhartha Gigoo

[Siddhartha Gigoo is the author of critically acclaimed novel *The Garden of Solitude*. He studied English Literature at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He has also written two books of poems, *Fall and Other Poems* and *Reflections*.]

'We are all migrants', proclaimed a discerning friend of mine during a symposium on Literatures in Exile. We were debating migrations of different people from one place to the other and the impact of exile on the politics and discourse of art and literature. I was particularly drawn to examining contemporary literary writings (in India) as a result of 'forced exile'. We all agreed upon the fact that most of twentieth century world literature would cease to exist without exile writing.

In 1990, Kashmir witnessed a sudden eruption of militancy, aided by extremist elements from across the border. The winter of 1990 also witnessed a silent exodus of the Kashmiri Hindus (called Pandits) from their homeland. In a few months, hundreds of thousands of Pandits left their homes in Kashmir to seek refuge in other parts of the country. An entire community got displaced. The community has been living in exile ever since. Most have settled outside their homeland. However, many still long for their homeland. This longing has found expression and utterance in writing and other artistic forms.

The hard truth is that the present day Kashmiri Pandit migrant seems to have found new roots and carved a new identity after twenty long years of living in exile outside of the homeland. .. ... The burden of exile has perished and therefore does not find utterance and expression in any creative form originating out of the displaced community.

The hard truth is that the present day Kashmiri Pandit migrant seems to have found new roots and carved a new identity after twenty long years of living in exile outside of the homeland. The brutal past seems to have melted for the migrants. The agonising sense of loss of home no longer weighs heavy on their hearts and souls, as it used to some years back. The burden of exile has perished and therefore does not find utterance and expression in any creative form originating out of the displaced community.

Has the community kept its struggle (for return to their long-lost homeland) alive through literature or any other artistic expression? This question continues to plague the community writers. The first few years in exile were full of dreadful horror, in terms of the migrants experiencing terrible hardship, pain, and suffering, which in turn, resulted in an unwavering passion for survival and life. In the early nineties in Jammu and adjoining districts, migrant writers used to assemble in rented tenements and organise poetry recitation sessions. It was interesting to see migrant writers come in contact with the Dogra poets. During one such session, pastoral poetry plaited well with

exile poetry. Images of love, life and nature contrasted beautifully with those of death, bloodshed, loneliness and up-rootedness. One could see the birth of a new and powerful idiom in Kashmir Pandit writing in exile. The old found refuge in nostalgia and longing, while the young writers penned around the themes of revolt and rebellion.

Over the years an erosion of identity and memory set in for the migrant community; yet a new identity was born, giving rise to a new artistic consciousness of all the previous Kashmiri Pandit migrations, the last and the seventh one in the January of 1990 created many writers. Unfortunately, there has not been any form of creative writing on the previous six migrations. The experience of exile in the previous migrations resonates only in terms of folklore, oral traditions, proverbs and sayings; and much of it is not remembered anymore by the children and the young generation of the community. However, the migration of 1990

created a condition so wretched for the community, that the first 10 years saw the emergence of some forceful literary works, mostly poetry, in all the three languages, namely, the English, the Kashmiri and the Hindi. Literary associations such as *Samprati*, *Sanmuck* (?) and *Nagrad* were founded during the early years of exile, even while the migrants struggled to come to terms with an unfamiliar land, where life vacillated from one nightmare to the other and where day and night meant either the harsh sun or the deadly snake-bite.

Early exile writings in the English, the Kashmiri and the Hindi dwelled on the themes of nostalgia, rootlessness, alienation, homelessness, climate and insecurity. Most writers, living in abject conditions in camps set up by the administration at Jammu and adjoining districts were initially devastated by a sense of desolation. The old and the infirm went through hell because of the harsh weather. Family values got broken. Privacy got compromised, as displaced family members got thrown into puny tents where they had to huddle in perpetual darkness. The ideas of space and time got distorted. Rituals became meaningless. Many got inflicted with disease and insanity owing to the sudden loss of freedom. Soon this collective sense of desolation, dereliction and deprivation was to crave expression in the form of poetry and fiction. Nostalgia gave rise to a feeling of loss of identity and of self. A sense of oppression, fear and existential angst prevailed throughout. Human relationships got shattered. The poetry and fiction of migrant writers such as Agnishekhar, Kshama Kaul, Tej Nath Dhar, Chandrakanta, Bimla Raina, Arjan Dev Majboor, R L Shant, H K Kaul, M L Kemmu, Amar Malmohi, M L Saqi, M L Pandit, H K Bharti and others reflected this human plight and experience of exile.

There were a host of others who wrote and recited excerpts from their works during literary gatherings but never got published.

The last 20 years did indeed produce writers most of who expressed their feelings and their condition through poetry and short fiction, written in English, Hindi, Kashmiri and Urdu. More than 200 books written by around 60 migrant writers have found their way on to the book shelves. But a good critical study of this literature on exile reveals that none of the works are comparable to the greats of world literature.

The last 20 years did indeed produce writers most of who expressed their feelings and their condition through poetry and short fiction, written in English, Hindi, Kashmiri and Urdu. More than 200 books written by around 60 migrant writers have found their way on to the book shelves. But a good critical study of this literature on exile reveals that none of the works are comparable to the greats of world literature.

Kshama Kaul's work *Samay Ke Baad* is perhaps the only one which stands out in terms of the themes it deals with, the imagery, the symbolism and the writing style adopted by the author. Written in Hindi and brought out in 1998, the book is dedicated to the migrants and the refugees of the whole world. Although written in the form of a diary, the book presents a Kafkaesque picture of the world in which a migrant struggles to survive and adapt to new and hostile surroundings. Kaul redraws the borders between fact and fiction and lays bare the wounds of a migrant protagonist in such a way that one is reminded of Camus and Dostoevsky. *Samay Ke Baad* (roughly translated as The Day After Time) converts suffering into art. There are passages in the book which do reflect artistic excellence. 'We are trying to know each other in this darkness. With smell ... through touch. We ask for the road the leads to our home. Each one is petrified tongue sticking to the roof. Darkness has spread over our being.'

In *Dardpur*, Kshama Kaul brings out nostalgia, persecution and suffering. Some of the soliloquies in this novel mercilessly expose the socio-political reality of Kashmir, which led to the Pandit migration from the valley.

Chandrakanta's award winning and seminal *Katha Satisar*, has been hailed as a magnum opus in contemporary writing in Hindi. However, the exodus of Pandits is discussed only in the last chapter.

Under the Shadow of Militancy: The Diary of an Unknown Kashmiri by Tej Nath Dhar was published by Rupa and Co in 2002. It records the social and political happenings in Kashmir through the nineties. The narrator is an unknown Kashmiri Pandit. Written in English, the book enjoys a wider readership in India and abroad. It, however, failed to capture the imagination of the exiled people and others interested in exile literature.

K L Chowdhary's anthology of poems in English '*Of Gods, Militants and Men*' published in 2000 paints a painful picture of 'exodus and exile'. Each poem is a lamentation, a drop of blood on a pure white snowflake.

Sadly, not many people took notice of Parineeta Khar's collection of riveting and haunting short stories published in the form of an anthology '*We were and We will be*' in 2005. Many of her stories, revolving around banishment and exile, portray the erosion of human relationships.

Most of the contemporary exile writing in Hindi and Kashmiri continues to remain imprisoned, because there is no effort to undertake translations in the English language, which could open new vistas in terms of a global readership. Moreover, lack of patronage, marketing and promotion of this literature by patrons, publishers, media, literary associations, intellectuals, scholars and academia will eventually lead to erosion of creativity among the Pandit writers. Most migrant writers are forced to self-publish and self-promote.

Years from now, how will the Kashmiri Pandit generation know of the period spent in exile? How will they assess the influence of exile on their consciousness, their being, their identity, and their sensibility? Great art and literature shape the consciousness of a people. Will the literary tradition and legacy left behind by the greats such as Dina Nath Nadim and Master Zinda Kaul be carried forward by the present day writers?

The migrant writers of today are utterly preoccupied with devotional poetry. While this poetry does have artistic merits, it borders too much on the metaphysical and spiritual. The symbolism is too banal. The poetry craves intellectual content. It lacks metaphors which are intelligible to the common people. In the literary works, there is an ardent desire to revive the forgotten rituals and customs and to return to the long lost homeland. Besides, critical appreciation is strangely missing.

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For most migrants, especially the youth, the human condition is no longer an issue which provokes and inspires. The migrants might have found their roost; the temporary perch which was erected to provide shade and shelter has become a new permanent home. Inner conflict and turmoil have ceased to exist. The writers suddenly find themselves in a comfort zone where there is no love, no despair, no struggle, no pain, no longing, no passion and no literary and artistic leanings. They are no longer forsaken and forlorn.

In his book, *The Ugly Kashmiri (Cameos in Exile)* published by Allied Publishers in 2006, Arvind Gigoo says 'I have snapped all ties with Kashmir. Now I have come to your office to collect the state subject certificates of my children.'

This truth is a wound which has healed now. I still await a 'Midnight's Children' from the children of exile.

Folklore

Some Mystical Aspects of the Kashmiri Folktale *Akanandun*

Geetika Kaw Kher

Folklore reflects folk values and folk beliefs which are interactive and integral components of culture and ethos of a people. Various genres of folklore like folktales, folksongs, ballads, oral epic, folk theatre and other forms essentially contain features that enrich social life with all their vivacity and variety. Kashmir has rich folkloric traditions that go back to centuries, sharing many pan-Indian traits and characteristics and yet retaining a distinct regional flavour. Today origins of several themes that appear in Kashmiri folklore forms have totally faded away from folk memory, while some themes have not survived in their original form, having undergone mutations and variations due to a number of undetermined factors.

Kashmir has rich folkloric traditions that go back to centuries, sharing many pan-Indian traits and characteristics and yet retaining a distinct regional flavour. Today origins of several themes that appear in Kashmiri folklore forms have totally faded away from folk memory, while some themes have not survived in their original form... ...

While magic, mystery and the supernatural element form inseparable aspects of folklore, there are several folktales in Kashmiri, as in other Indian languages, which have themes and structures permeated by elements that lend themselves easily to allegorical interpretations and reveal a vast potential for "atemporal- mystical" meaning. Not the surface or literal meaning that can be baffling and confusing at times as it defies logical thinking, but the deeper message that may need semiotic tools to decode. One such tale from Kashmir which has terribly fascinated me with its intriguing central motif of mystical restoration to life or renewal of life is the story of Akanandun. The story, which has a didactic aspect, has been told, retold, presented many times, hence I am focusing on the core of the story rather than the details which might have been added later.

Apart from the central motif the other recognizable one with which the story starts is that of an intense desire that people have for a male child. The anxiety to have a male heir to perpetuate the ancestral lineage is a most commonly discerned trait in patriarchal communities. There are stories about the absurd lengths that parents go to in order to have this desire fulfilled. In the story of Akanandun too we find Akanandun's parents, who happen to be a king and a queen, desperate to have a son although they already have seven daughters, the number seven not being without symbolical significance. On their part, the daughters too are shown filled with intense longing to have a brother. It is at this psychological moment that the Jogi appears as if out of nowhere and

making his crucial entry in the story, offers to grant them their wish, though not without a condition. They are unable to believe their ears, with the prospect of having a son so overwhelming them that they are prepared to do anything to have him. The Jogi knows their weaknesses, the intensity of their desperation, and elicits from them the promise that they will return the child bestowed on them through his miraculous powers, exactly twelve years after his birth. Without giving a second thought to the implications this could actually have, Akanandun's parents, accept the Jogi's condition. Delirious with joy at his birth, they rejoice and bring him up offering all the pleasures that they can provide, imagining the period of twelve years to be an eternity away.

Lost completely in the flow of happiness that the presence of their son brings to them, the royal couple tries to wish away the future. Probably the fear of losing the child may have lurked somewhere in their subconscious, but they do not let that come to the surface and hamper their joy. Once engrossed in the pleasures that they experience in boy's company, they totally lose sight of the threat that looms over them because of the promise. But the Jogi does not forget; he remembers the promise very well and returns exactly at the stipulated time, demanding that the boy be returned to him. Suddenly they wake up as though from a dream. The reality of the Jogi's appearance shatters their reverie and they beg the Jogi to spare the child and take whatever else he wants.

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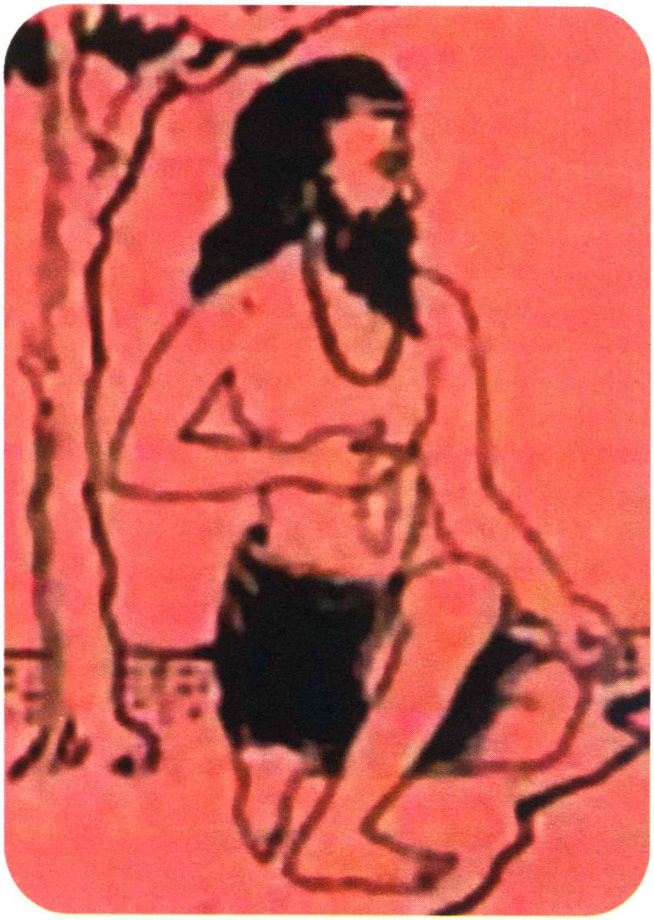
Here the story seems to highlight the aspect of '*moha*'. The couple and their seven daughters have grown extremely fond of the boy and they weep, wail and use every stratagem to envoke the Jogi's sympathy. But the latter has given up the world and along with it all materialistic concerns. He remains unmoved, untouched by the extreme emotions displayed by the family and makes it plain that he will have nothing but the child. He harshly reminds them of their fateful promise. As the moment of realization of the actual implication of the promise dawns, gloom descends upon the minds of Akanandun's parents. It is a state of unmitigated despair.

Greatly aggrieved and pained, the parents oblige with a heavy heart and call Akanandun, a young, energetic and handsome lad of twelve who has shown great promise in all the fields, asking him to go with the hard-hearted ascetic. But what follows is unimaginable horror, something worse than the worst of nightmares. The Jogi instead of taking the boy with him commands that he be cleansed and draped in new clothes. And when the child is ready, he takes him to a side and axes him in full view of his parents. How terrible it must have been for them to witness the gory act! But their horror does not end here. The Jogi starts cutting the boy's body in small pieces and nonchalantly separates the flesh from the bones. This leaves the parents shell-shocked but helpless. In front of them is their dear son, killed and chopped into pieces. Imagine the condition of the mother who was then ordered by the Jogi to wash the pieces of the meat and cook them as a dish. The fact that she is shown complying with such a gruesome order cannot be explained except in terms of faith and points to the awe and reverence with which such ascetics were held. Fear of a curse or the demonstration of his tremendous supernatural powers by the Jogi can be of course a plausible cause, but it is not out of fear alone that a mother can force herself to take such a horrible step. Somewhere, it implies a trust in the spiritual prowess of the Jogi who had given her the greatest happiness of her life. But he is shown going a step further in this drama of horrors. Crossing all limits, he commands her to taste the flesh to see if it is properly cooked and also to serve the dish in seven vessels and cover them with a white cloth. Again she complies, almost mechanically. But she can control her feelings no more when the ascetic asks her to call Akanandun to partake of his share of the horrible meal. She bursts into tears and says that in no way can this be possible for her. She cries her heart out, but the Jogi does not relent. There must have been something in the Jogi's voice that makes her call her son, but she does so in most pitiful a voice --a wail of a lamenting mother on whom the extent of her loss has just dawned. But even as she is undergoing these extreme emotions, Akanandun comes rushing into the room and takes his place, ready to have the meal. Dazed and bewildered, the family can believe their eyes no more.



They turn their questioning glances towards the Jogi, only to find no one there. The holy man has disappeared along with the seven vessels. There is nothing which can remind them of the dreadful act they had witnessed only moments back. Was it all unreal, an illusion, maya? Who was the Jogi in reality and what was the purpose of his testing them in this manner?

The story is full of macabre and violent imagery, suffused to the core with *bibhatsa* rasa, arousing tremendous *jugupsa* (disgust), yet I feel that somewhere it has a cleansing power. A catharsis of sorts is achieved by reading and sure enough by watching the story being enacted. The narrative takes us through different planes of emotion, increases our heartbeats, purges us of the emotions of pity and fear embedded in our psyche. On one hand it has its own value as a moving human story; on the other it offers us an outlet into the realm of the mysterious, of supernatural powers and miracles accessible only through faith. Probably this is why the narrative has had a great appeal for Kashmiri Sufi poets like Samad Mir, Ahad Zargar and others who have used it to illustrate their concept of *tawakkul* or submission before God's wish – an important stage in Sufi spiritual practice.

As it emerges, the Jogi is a central character in the story of Akanadun. What is of great significance is that he connects the folktale unmistakably with the pan-Indian tradition of a sect of renouncer ascetics who have passed into folklore from their origins as followers of the Nath Sampradaya that was founded by the legendary Gorakh Nath or Gorakshanatha, probably in the 10th century. Their beliefs and practices are largely associated with Shaivite asceticism and Buddhist Tantrik ideology, the word *jogi* being a derivative of Skt. yogi. Following Gorakh Nath's teachings, the Jogis practice various meditative and physical techniques to achieve self-realization. About Gorakh Nath, to whom these Jogis trace their lineage, the legend goes as follows:

Once a devotee of Shiva desired offspring, so the god, at Parvati's intercession, gave him some ashes from his dhuni or fire and told him to make his wife eat them. His wife, however, was incredulous and did not comply but let the ashes fall on a heap of cow dung. Eventually the devotee found a child where the ashes had been thrown, and took it to Shiva, who said that the child will grow up to be a yogi, a great spiritual soul and will return back to him.

Jogi is the popular designation of Gorakh Nath's followers, the adherents of the Nath cult. Their cult spread rapidly through many parts of India, especially in the north, and in popular thought they came to be associated with certain external trappings and peculiarities of behavior. Smeared with sacred ashes and wearing ochre robes and large earrings in split ears with a begging bowl in hand they went from village to village and town to town to beg for alms, fervently making utterances like "*Alakh Niranjan!*" or invoking the name of Shiva. Stories and

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tales of their extraordinary spiritual powers and secret knowledge, believed to have been acquired by them through rigorous cultic practices and strict self-discipline, gathered volume and became a remarkable part of popular lore over time. The figure of the Jogi with all his idiosyncrasies appeared persistently and ubiquitously in Sanskrit as well as regional literatures and various folklore genres of India. Although a renouncer of the world and worldly pleasures, he often interfered in the affairs of the householders to whom he went for alms, helping them to solve their problems or to have their mundane wishes fulfilled through his mysterious supernatural powers. These included, among other things, the powers to bestow a child, more often a son, to childless couples and to restore the dead to life. In many folktales related to the Jogis, we see them performing miraculous feats in a matter of fact manner, which made them favourite characters of the common people.

Our Jogi in the Kashmiri tale of Akanandun too is endowed with these extraordinary powers and fits well with the general character of such ascetics in the pan-Indian Nath traditions. The tale has survived from submergence under the flood of Islamic religio-historical themes probably because of its popularization by the Sufi poets, for whom, as pointed out earlier, it served as an illustration of concepts related to their spiritual practice. The Jogi features as a character in a few other Kashmiri folktales as well, but with only minor and peripheral roles to play. The power of restoration to or renewal of life that the Jogi demonstrates in the Akanadun story is its main motif. This motif is not, however, confined to the *jogi* lore alone, but is a cross-cultural one. It can be seen, for instance, in the well known Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac as the motif of resurrection. Gen 22 NIV states that God ordered Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, to the region of Mariah and sacrifice him as a burnt offering to Him.

A story related to the myth of resurrection is also found in Egyptian Myth of Osiris, the god of afterlife who was cut into pieces by his arch enemy Set and was brought back to life by his wife Isis. Isis collected all the body parts and arranged them in order and started singing a song while going around the pieces until her husband came back to life and later on came to be known as the 'god of afterlife'.

One finds in these different stories a stress on faith and trust, which appears to be their point of intersection. Somewhere in our story of Akanandun too it is faith and trust of the family, especially the mother, in the Jogi that seem to have been tested. One sees here a willing submission to the wishes of someone who has blessed her with a son. But the story appears to go even beyond that. What the Jogi wants to demonstrate through his act of disappearance towards the end is that the nature of both life and death is illusory.

The story of Akanandun has definitely a mystical message to convey at the allegorical level. This can be decoded only after studying the violent imageries in the tale in the light of their motivational factors and the elements it has in common with the popular lore related to the Jogi tradition in other regional languages of India.

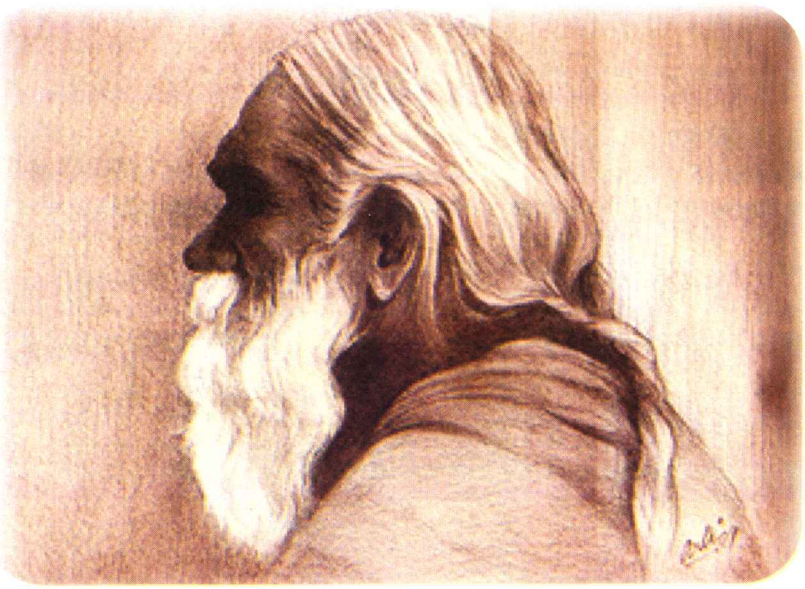
As Subhash Kak observes, the idea of *paroksha* or paradox, in Epic myths can be extended to folk literature too. In such narratives the moral ambiguity works like the hubris of Greek myth and drama, creating a space that is not quite in the realm of gods, although it is superhuman. The story of Akanandun has definitely a mystical message to convey at the allegorical level. This can be decoded only after studying the violent imageries in the tale in the light of their motivational factors and the elements it has in common with the popular lore related to the Jogi tradition in other regional languages of India.

Essay

Ananadavardhana and his Theory of Poetic Suggestion

Niraj Kumar

One of the most brilliant aesthetic thinkers of India, Ananadavardhana has made an immensely significant contribution to the development of the Sanskrit literary theory. His famous treatise on poetic suggestion, *Dhvanyaloka*, is a seminal work in the field of poetics and is regarded almost as highly important as Panini's *Ashtadhyayi* in the field of grammar. It is in fact a paradigm-changing work that revolutionized aesthetic thinking in India, its ideas providing parametres for appreciation of not only meaning in poetry but also beauty in other arts. If one can sum up in one sentence Anandavardhana's core concept of *dhvani* or poetic suggestion, one can say that what is explicit is mere expression of the implicit; what is seen is mere manifestation of the unseen, what is immanent is merely the unfolding of the transcendent, what is *saguna* has a *nirguna* aspect. It is thus a kind of encapsulation of the Indian way of thinking. Transcendental reality can be experienced in an intuitive flash by a few adepts and so can poetic meaning. Moreover, the objective of comprehending the extraordinary implicit sense in poetry is *rasa* or savouring of aesthetic delight.



Anandavardhana was born in a Kashmiri Brahmin family. He was a courtier of King Avantivarman (855-883 A.D.) of Kashmir, as mentioned in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. Thus, his works can be attributed to the mid-ninth century. Besides being an aesthetician of high merit, he was also a poet with several poetic works to his credit. These include *Arjunacharita* and *Devishataka* in Sanskrit, and *Vishambanalila* in Prakrit. But of these only the *Devishataka* is available now. Strangely though, it is a not a work of high poetic merit, but *chitrakavya* or pictorial poetry, a type that he has himself described to be of a very inferior kind in *Dhvanyaloka*. *Vishambanalila* is an epic in Prakrit in which Kamadeva is

shown frolicking with his friends. Anandavardhana was a philosopher and a scholar too. His philosophical works include *Tattvaloka* and his *vritti* on *Vinishchayatika-dharmottama*. But it is *Dhvanyaloka*, his epoch-making work on poetics that won him immortality. It served as a lighthouse in the vast ocean of Sanskrit creativity. The *Dhvanyaloka* consists of two parts -- the gnomic verses (*karika*) and the exposition (*vritti*). There has been a long controversy about the real author of the *karika* part. While many like Jacobi, S. K. De and P. V. Kane are of the opinion that the *vritti* and the *karika*s have been written by two different authors, most scholars agree about single authorship of the two parts following Abhinavagupta's indication in the *Abhinavabharati* that both the *karika*s and the *vritti* are written by Anandavardhana himself.

Anandavardhana's cultural milieu

During the time of Anandavardhana's postulations, India was passing through a post-imperial phase when there was no single central authority to keep it politically united. There were no unifying empires like the Kushanas or the Guptas but regional kingdoms of the Palas, Cholas, Pratiharas, Rashtrakutas, Senas and, of course, the Utpalas in Kashmir. The collapse of the Gupta Empire led to the breakdown of a strong support system for the earlier sophisticated cultural enterprises. According to Edwin Gerow, Sanskrit drama lost its audience (never more than the society of sophisticates attracted to the imperial courts and cities) and its means of support (wealthy literati). Though plays continued to be written, these were now rarely performed (Gerow, 1977, p 251). Gerow writes:

"On the side of strophic poetry, changes too were taking place, reflecting the new contexts in which poetry was used. We see growing devotionalism, and the employment of song, and also music, even marked shifts from Sanskrit to vernaculars. Poetry was becoming de-sophisticated (though poetry on classical lines continued to be written in an increasingly academic and un-courtly vein, paralleling the drama); its socially alive forms did move with the times, and came under the sway of social, inevitably popular religious movements that were seeking new ways to express their needs. New metres showing the impact of regular musical beats, rhyming on 'modern' lines emphasizing simple couplets phrasing so typical of song, crept into Sanskrit from the popular levels(Ardhamagahi *doha*s of the 8th-9th century Jain canon), achieving a complete, and for later generations, standard formulations in the poem of Jayadeva, the *Gita Govinda* (12th century)."

The Bhakti movement emerged in the southern peninsula during the 6th and 7th centuries, with most of the Bhakti saints belonging to the lower castes. The hymns and sermons were composed in vernacular Tamil language by the Nayanaras (Shaivism) and the Alvars (Vaishnavism). It spread gradually to other parts of the country as a strong wave.

It was also the time of emergence of the cult of the eighty four *Siddhas* among Buddhists in the eastern part of India with the centre at Nalanda. The *Siddha* tradition emerged in the south (Tamil *Siddhas*) as well as the north (the *Natha Siddha*s). The *Siddha*s like the *bhakti* saints mostly belonged to lower castes and composed their poems in vernacular languages. The *charyapada* verses composed by them are regarded as the earliest composition in the emerging vernacular languages like Assamese, Bengali and Oriya.

In the post-Gupta, pre-Islamic period, the religious landscape was also undergoing massive transformation. As a result of millenarianism, the concept of *avatara* held sway across the religious spectrum. The Puranas were being composed by the revivalist Hindu sects and Buddhism was undergoing a major schism. In *Dhvanyaloka*, Ananadavardhana alludes to the three-fold division of *katha*s with the narrative of the new gods referred to in Haribhadra's '*Samaratcchakaha*" (730-780A.D.) as *divya*, *manusha* and *divya–manusha*. The fragmentation in the polity had its *dhvani* (resonance) in the religious realm. It is the time when one finds a major shift from ancient order to new order. In Anandavardhana's Kashmir, a wide range of Tantric cults, both Hindu and Buddhist, which had started emerging from the 5th century itself, enjoyed a wide popularity and impacted every aspect of social and religious life. Of particular importance was the upsurge of the non- dualist Shaivism, deriving from *Shaivagamic* traditions which it shared with the dualist Siddhanta Shaivism. Some of its basic texts like the *Shiva Sutra*s had come to be written, strongly contributing to the generation of a new spiritual and intellectual climate with Siddhanta showing definite signs of decline and surviving mainly in the South.

Thus, the time of Anandavardhana was a period of flux in which monopolizing tendencies were withering away. There was creative plurality with Sanskrit itself beginning to face the challenge of vernacular languages which were

soon to become the preferred medium of creative expression. Anandavardhana himself was a participant in this flux. He was a great connoisseur of Prakrit poetry and wrote a narrative poem in the language, the *Vishamabanalila*, as has been referred to above.

It was in this situation of flux and intellectual ferment that great debates on *rasa* or aesthetic emotion were taking place among poetic theorists and scholars, each interpreting Bharata's famous *rasa sutra* or definitive aphorism about what constitutes the aesthetic experience according to his own philosophical standpoint. While agreeing generally that the ultimate objective of *kavya* was the evocation of *rasa* or aesthetic relish, they differed widely about the nature and location of the *rasa* experience. By the time Anandavardhana expounded his revolutionary *dhvani* theory, Sanskrit poetics had developed along two distinct traditions of poetic appreciation and evaluation – *rasa* and *alamkara*. There was also the *Riti* School with *gunas* or stylistic qualities as its basic parameter. Both *Alamakra* and *Riti* schools were more concerned with structural or stylistic aspects than evocation of feeling which forms the core of the *rasa* theory. A universally accepted literary theory had still not come into existence and it was here that Annadavardhana was to play a very significant role.

By the time Anandavardhana expounded his revolutionary *dhvani* theory, Sanskrit poetics had developed along two distinct traditions of poetic appreciation and evaluation – *rasa* and *alamkara*. There was also the *Riti* School with *gunas* or stylistic qualities as its basic parameter.

Meanwhile, the need for an overarching theory of unity at the intellectual level was being strongly felt. If unity was not possible in the political or religious sphere, could it be posited in the realm of literature? Mimamsa and Vedanta philosophers both vied with each other for postulating such an over-arching concept of unity. Shankaracharya, only few decades before Anadavardhana, had propounded the philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*. The Vedantists drew inspiration from the ideas of the great linguistic philosopher, Bhartrihari (450-510AD), who founded the *shabdadvaita* (word- monism or linguistic monism) school of thought. Looking at the problem from the linguistic angle, Bhartrihari tried to explain pluralities of the phenomenal world in terms of the unity generated by *shabdatattva* or the word-principle in his famous treatise, the *Vakyapadiya*. If the Word is the Brahman and if the Universe is the manifestation of the Brahman, the Word identified with Brahman or Reality is the subtle ground for an all-pervading unity. The meaning of the *pada* (sentence), the speech-unit, is indivisible (*akhanda*). Meaning can not be reduced to its parts. Individual words are distinguished only for the purposes of convention or expression. This whole-meaning (*sphota*) is intuited in a moment of instantaneous flash (*pratibha*).

Alamkara Shastra and *Dhvani*

As said earlier, there were two major theories in vogue in Sanskrit poetics, as B.K.Matilal has pointed out. One was centred on *alamkara* or embellishment of word and meaning by means of figures of speech, and the other on *rasa* or evocation of aesthetic emotion. There were also theories pertaining to guna or poetic qualities and riti or diction, but the science of Sanskrit poetics was broadly designated as *alamkara shastra*. Bhamaha was the founder of this rhetorical school with Udbhatta, Dandin, Vamana, Rudrabhatta etc. contributing significantly to it, all being predecessors of Ananadavardhana. This school believed that in the poetry *alamkara* or ornamentation is the dominating feature. Describing poetry as "well matched form and content", Bhamaha was of the view that *vakrokti*, or deviation from the ordinary mode of expression, is the best *alamkara* for it. For Vamana, the founder of the Riti school, *alamkara* meant beauty itself and not just ornamentation. "*Saundaryam alamkarah*" (*alamkara* means beauty), he states in his *Kavyalamkarasutravritti* (KASV). Dandin on the other hand says in his *Kavyadarsha*: "*Kavya shobhakaran dharman alamkaran prachakshate*" or "characteristics that make poetry beautiful are called *alamkara*".

Alamkaras or figures of speech, it may be pointed out, are of two types –*shabdalamkara* or figures of speech and *arthaalamkara* or figures of sense. The number of *alamkaras* was, however, by no means fixed and went on multiplying. Whereas Vamana describes only two *shabdalamkaras* and regards *all arthalamkaras* as aspects of *upama* or the simile, Mammata defines 61 *arthalamkaras*

and 6 *shabdalamkaras* in his *Kavyaprakasha*. Rajashekhara in his work, *Alamkara Makarandah* (The Nectar of Alamkaras) discusses 63 *alamkaras*. Whatever the case be, there are three major kinds of *shabdaalamkaras* or the figures of speech: *anuprasa* (alliteration), *yamaka* (pun) and *shlesha* (paronomasia, double entendre). Some frequently used *arthaalamkaras* or the figures of sense are *upama (simile), rupaka (metaphor), atishayokti* (hyperbole), *virodha* (paradox) *utpreksha* (fancy) and *vakrokti* (deviant utterance).

However, the art of poetry did not remain confined to listing of *alamkaras* or structural elements alone but was also subjected to a deeper inquiry about what constituted its essence. The metaphor about the body made more beautiful by ornaments was extended. If the poetry is externally a body, it was argued, and *alamkaras* are the ornaments that enhance its beauty, what constitutes its soul became a major issue that was confronted by rhetoricians like Vamana. Anandavardhana, while not dispensing with the use of figures altogether, thought it more important to draw attention to the significance of the emotive import of poetry. Making what proved to be the most significant development in the whole discourse, he came up with his seminal concept of *dhvani* or poetic suggestion, through which he felt the emotive power of poetry could be best brought out. It was *dhvani*, he declared in the very first verse of the *Dhvanyaloka* that was the soul of the poetry ---'*kavyasyatma dhvaniriti*' **(DL, I.1).**

...*Dhvani* is suggested meaning that echoes and carries within itself the impressions produced by all other forms of meanings -- *abhidha, lakshana* or *tatparya*. It is like the intuitive flash of *sphota* that *dhvani* is comprehended in the poetic utterance.

Language being the medium of literary expression, earlier critics had emphasized the essential unity of *shabda* and *artha* or word and meaning. In poetic context or in ordinary discourse, they had pointed out, meaning of a word operates through two or rather three semantic powers. The first of these is *abhidha* or denotation that gives the literal or lexical meaning. In certain instances where the denotative power does not give the appropriate meaning in the context, the second power called *lakshana* or indication comes into play which modifies denotation to provide the metaphorical sense of a word. There is a third one also known as *tatparya* or purport through which the integral meaning of a linguistic statement emerges from the context. Anandavardhana's theory of *dhvani* or resonance, however, made a major departure by positing a special power of words – *vyanjana* or suggestion. It is the suggested sense, he declared, that operates in poetry at a deeper level than either denotation or the literal sense, or indication or the metaphorical sense, and unravels poetic beauty. Abhinavagupta, who wrote a brilliant commentary '*Lochana*' on the *Dhvanyaloka* says that *dhvani* or suggested meaning is the fourth power of the word -- "*Chaturthyam tu kakshayam dhvanana-vyapara* **(*Dhvanyalokalochana*,** I.4).

Anandavardhana's theory was severely criticized and opposed by some scholars of grammar and logic, who vehemently argued against the necessity of positing *vyanjana* as a linguistic power for communication of meaning in poetry. *Abhida* or denotation was sufficient to lead to it through the process of *anumana* (inference) or *tatparya* (purport), they said. The *Dhvani* theorists fought back with equal vehemence to establish that the suggested meaning in a poetic construction did not come within the ambit of any of these linguistic powers but beyond them. They likened it to ripples of resonance produced when a metal is struck or to an echo subtly produced by a voice.

Many are of the view that the roots of Anandavardhana's concept of *dhvani* can be traced to Vamana's conception of *vakrokti* or obliquity of poetic expression (on which Kuntaka later based an entire theory). Anandavardhana, however, went beyond the semantic meaning and sought to unravel deeper mysteries of poetic beauty by linking the suggestive mode to *rasa* or aesthetic delight and thus combined the two into a "unified theory of aesthetic response". Later, Abhinavagupta established the pre-eminence of the *rasa-dhvani* theory on a firm footing in the *Lochana*.

To explain his concept of *dhvani* or the suggested sense, Anandavardhana used the analogy of *lavanya* or charm in ladies. He wrote:

"But the suggested aspect is quite different from this. In the words of the first-rate poets it shines supreme and towers above the beauty of the striking external

conditions even as charm in ladies (**DL, I.4).**

The *lavanaya* (charm) of a lady, he said, is always more than the beauty of her different limbs or her physical appearance, more than the beauty of ornaments and the dress. It is intrinsic and beyond expression. Similarly, *dhvani* in a poetic composition is the charm of poetry. It is beyond the explicit sense. It is suggested and cannot be reduced to mundane meaning, either ordinary or embellished. It delights the reader just as a lady's charm delights the admirer. Anandavardhana uses various illustrations from Prakrit as well as Sanskrit literature to describe the nature of *dhvani* which is implicit in a poetic composition. Anandavardhana refers to the suggested sense as the soul of poetry and says:

"That alone is the soul of poetry; and so it was that, of yore, the sorrow of the First Poet (Valmiki) at the separation of the *krauncha* pair took the form of a *shloka*" **(DL I.5)**.

Sometimes the suggested meaning i.e. *dhvani* may be of the nature of prohibition while the explicit meaning is of the nature of positive approval. Anandavardhana explains the *karika* with an example: "Ramble freely, pious man! That dog today is killed By the fierce lion that dwells In Goda river dells." **(DL, I-4, p 9)**

Here the idea suggested is in the sense of prohibition, but the explicit meaning is the idea of moving freely.

A primer to *Dhvanyaloka*

Dhvanyaloka consists of the verse as well as commentary portions. It is divided into four *udyota*s or flashes (chapters) containing 19, 33, 47 and 17 verses respectively. In the first *udyota*, various views criticizing the concept of *dhvani* have been discussed. The nature of *dhvani* as suggestion has been explained and it has been sought to establish that *dhvani* is the soul of poetry. In the second *udyot*, different types of *dhvani* have been discussed in terms of the role of the suggested meaning (*vyangyartha*). The importance of *rasa* has and various associated metaphors are also described and discussed. Arguments of the opposing schools of rhetoricians have been refuted and demolished. The third *udyota* is the longest. Here *dhvani* has been discussed from the point of view of the suggested word (*vyanjaka*). The fourth *udyota* describes the wider scope of the applicability of the concept of *dhvani*. Here Anandavardhana establishes that like the principle of unity of action in drama, unity of *rasa* is necessary in a poetic composition. A poet ought to strive for evocation of a single *rasa* in his work. And if another *rasa* is necessary, it should be treated as mere auxiliary to the main suggested *rasa*.

Similarly, *dhvani* is suggested meaning that echoes and carries within itself the impressions produced by all other forms of meanings -- *abhidha*, *lakshana* or *tatparya*. It is like the intuitive flash of *sphota* that *dhvani* is comprehended in a poetic utterance. *Dhvani* incorporates within it the *abhidha* and *lakshana* aspects. One can arrive at the suggested meaning (*dhvani*) either through *abhidha* (literal meaning) or *lakshana* (metaphoric or indicative meaning). *Abhidha* and *lakshana* are the means and *vyanjana* (suggested meaning) the end. *Dhvani* is so termed because it reverberates. *Dhvani* is the implicit meaning and more than either the literal meaning or the indicative meaning. Just like there is *krama* (sequence) by which a word unravels its meaning, there is a *krama* by which *dhvani* is revealed. The sequence in grammar is from sound to word, from word to *sphota* and from *sphota* to cognition of meaning. Similarly, in poetic creation, the *krama* is from *abhidha* to *lakshana* and then to *vyanjana* / *dhvani*. Anandavardhana refers to this in the *karika* given bellow:

"Just as the purport of a sentence is grasped through the meaning of individual words, the knowledge of that sense is got at only through the medium of the explicit sense." **(DL, I.10).**

The suggested meaning manifests suddenly to the intelligent minds when they turn away from the literal meaning. Anandavardhana describes, *vyangyakavya* as the poetic utterance where the ordinary, literal or conventional meaning gives rise to the secondary meaning and the secondary meaning in turn suggests the implicit meaning **(DL, I.11)**. In the commentary, Anandavardhana sums up the position thus:

1. Where the suggested meaning is not prominent and merely ancillary to the expressed meaning, we have instances of *vachya-alamkara* (metaphor);
2. When the suggested meaning merely follows (*anugami*) the *vachyartha* (literal meaning), there is no *dhvani* poetry;
3. When both the *shabda* (word) and *artha* (meaning) are solely directed towards the suggested sense, only then does *dhvani* emerge. There should not be any confusion on this account.

Dhvani and *sphota*

In *Dhvanyaloka*, Anandavardhana himself admits, that the very term, "*dhvani*" has been borrowed from the grammarians who maintain that sound in its eternal form of *sphota* is identical with the Brahman, i.e. the Ultimate Reality. *Dhvani* articulates *sphota*. When a sound is produced by contact (*sparsha*), it is called *sphota* and from the mother sound wave succeeding sound waves are produced, giving it a kind of ripple effect These succeeding sound waves are *dhvani* which is audible when it comes in contact with the auditory organs. Since audible sounds are produced from initial *sphota*, *dhvani* is said to be suggested by *sphota*. Thus, *dhvani* becomes the suggested and *sphota* the suggester. Anandavardhana took up the idea of *dhvani* as suggested (*vyangya*) from this discussion of *sphota* and *dhvani* in Bhartrihari's work, the *Vakyapadiya*. Whereas in the *sphota* theory, *dhvani* is the *vyanjaka* of the *sphota*, i.e. initial sound; in the *Dhvanyaloka* it is suggested by both *sabda* and *artha* (word and meaning). It is on this basis of *dhvani* as *vyangya-artha* that Anandavardhana classified *dhvanikavya* into three major types – *vastu dhvani* where it is the object that is suggested, *alamkara dhvani* where the figure is suggested and *rasadhvani* where *rasa* forms the suggested sense.

The *sphota* doctrine emphasizes the ultimate unity of word and meaning, with *pashyanti vak* representing the stage of ultimate unity. The differentiation of word and meaning takes place at the stage of *madhyama vak*, but here the word and the meaning are not manifested externally. *Vak* as consciousness is a temporal unity. It is *akrama*, beyond temporal sequentiality. But, its third stage, *vaikhari* is the audible external sound that functions in time, and is hence governed by *karma* or temporal sequentality. *Vaikhari* reveals the *madhyama*. Here the audible phoneme is the *vyanjaka* and the *antarsphota* is *vyangya* or the suggested. *Varna* or the audible letter as *dhvani* reveals *sphota*. *Dhvani* has also the quality of resonance. Thus, the two-sided function of *dhvani* as having the power of revelation and process of resonance made it an apt concept to be adopted by Anandavardhana. Just like the echo in the audible sound, there is echo of various levels of meaning. Just as sound-waves reach our ears in temporal sequence, similarly the meaning is revealed in sequence.

Types of *dhvani* in poetic composition

Having established *vyanjana* or suggestion as a distinct linguistic power, Ananadvardhana classifies different categories of poetic creation in terms of the predominance of the suggested sense. The highest and the best kind poetry is that in which the suggested sense has dominance over the expressed sense. This is called *dhvani kavya* in which beauty lies in the resonance (*dhvani*) of the suggested sense and not the expressed. There can be poetry in which suggestion may be present but the suggested sense may not dominate the expressed sense. This kind of poetry is called *gunibhuta-vyangya-kavya* or poetry of subordinated suggestion. Then there is poetry which is devoid of any suggested sense. This kind of poetry has been given the name of *chitra kavya* or pictorial poetry and is regarded as the most inferior kind. After according *dhvani* the most predominant place in poetry, Anandavardhana categorizes it into three types according to the nature of what is suggested – *vastu dhavni*, *alamkara dhvani* and *rasa dhvani*.

If what is suggested is some idea or material fact then it is a case of *vastu dhvani*. If the suggested sense is some poetic figure, then it will be *alamkara dhvani*. If what is suggested constitutes *rasa* or aesthetic delight, it is called *rasa-dhvani*.. Here *rasa* itself becomes a non-verbal sense. There are two more main varieties of *dhvani* described in *Dhvanyaloka,* the *avivakshita-vakya* and *vivakshitanya-paravakya*, from the point of view of the suggestive element. In the former, the explicit sense is *avivakshita* i.e. inconsistent and in the latter it is consistent. In both the varieties of *dhvani* all five aspects of *dhvani* are expressed. These five aspects in the former case are as follows:

1. *Vyanjaka* -- Those suggestive words whose primary sense is useless
2. *Vyangyartha* -- the suggestive sense, which makes primarymeaning redundant.
3. *Vyanjana* -- the suggested meaning for whose sake the expressed meaning is rendered useless.
4. *Vyanajanavyapara* --the suggestive function through which the primary sense is discarded.
5. *Vyangyakavya* -- A poetic composition where the primary sense is discarded.

This can be explained by examining the famous lines from Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, "Brutus is an honourable man". Mark Antony in his funeral speech for Julius Caesar says,

"The noble Brutus...
Brutus is an honourable man."

It was because of Brutus that Caesar was killed. Here the address, "honourable" is a *vyanjaka* word signifying respect. But, the *vyanngyartha* is the crooked act of Brutus. The *vyanjana* i.e suggested meaning which Shakespeare

intends to convey is that despite the praise of Brutus, it is he who was responsible for Caesar's killing. The word functions to suggest the speaker's intention to publicly ridicule Brutus as a crooked man. This is *vyanjanavyapara.* The speech has predominance of suggestiveness and hence it is a *vyangyakavya.*(Bhavana Bhalla, 2008).

Like the types of *dhvani* classified according to the suggested sense, there is a large number of varieties and sub-varieties of *dhvani* based on the relationship between the suggester and suggested, *vyanjaka* and *vyangya,* mentioned in the *Dhvanyaloka.* The two main varieties according to this system of categorization are the *avivekshitavachya dhvani* and the *vivakshitanya-paravachya dhvani.* The *avivekshitavachya dhvani* ,which means unintended denotation, is *lakshana* or indication-based. Here the literal meaning is discarded. The *vivakshitanya-paravachya dhvani,* means suggestion of extended denotation. In this type, based on the denotation mode, the literal meaning is not discarded but is used to express the suggested sense.. This type of *dhvani* operates in all five aspects viz. suggestive words, suggestive ideas, suggested ideas, suggestion and the composition where these are predominant.

"Good qualities become really so only when they are appreciated by cultured minds; indeed lotuses become lotuses only when they are favoured by the rays of the sun." ome lotuses only when they are favoured by the rays of the sun."

These two varieties of *dhvani* are further divided into two sub-varieties each in the *Dhvanyaloka.* The *avivakshita-vachya dhvani* comprises of *artha-antara- samkramrit- vachya-dhvani* and *atyanta tiraskrita- vachya-dhavni.* The *vivakshitanya-paravachya* is divided into s*amlakshya- krama-vyangya-dhavni* and *asamlakshya- krama- vyangya-dhvani.*

The *artha-antara-samkramita-vachya dhvani* presents a case of progressive denotation. Here the primary sense is not incompatible. The literal meaning of the sentence on consideration of the text is given up in favour of the suggested sense. This has been explained by examining a verse by Anandvardhana:-

"Good qualities become really so only when they are appreciated by cultured minds; indeed lotuses become lotuses only when they are favoured by the rays of the sun."

The primary sense is that excellence should be recognized by cultured people. The suggestion comes from the second "lotus" in the expression "lotuses become lotuses". This suggests that when the ray of the sun falls properly, the lotuses bloom and become the seat of Lakshmi. Here, the primary sense is not completely discarded, but leads to the suggestion of the secondary sense. The *artha-antara-sankramita dhvani* is the category where the primary sense slowly fades away and the suggested sense appears.

The *atyanta- tiraskrita- vachya* encompasses all cases where some fact or idea is suggested by completely discarding the primary sense due to utter incompatibility. Ananadvardhana discusses this type by examining a verse given below in translation:

"The moon whose lustre has passed over to the sun and whose orbit is covered with the mist does not shine forth just as a mirror that is rendered blind by long heaving".

The context is the appearance of the moon in the early morning in the winter. It is like a mirror that is covered with cloudy warm vapors that come out while heaving in the winter. But, the moon is not a person with eyes which can be blinded. The mirror does not have eyes and it cannot be described as being blind. There is incongruence. But, if one looks for the suggested meaning, the picture becomes clearer. The mirror covered with the vapour is like a blind person which cannot see the external object. The mirror has lost its power to reflect and is rendered useless. The moon is in a similar predicament after having lost its lustre in a misty morning. Thus, the primary sense being incompatible is discarded in this case, and then by resorting to the secondary sense, arises the suggested meaning.

Let us now turn to the *samlakshya-krama-vyangya dhvani* sub-variety. Here we have suggestion of a perceptible process of transition from the expressed sense, *vachyartha* to the suggested meaning, *vyangartha,* in a distinguishable sequence. In *asamlakshya-krama-dhvani* or suggestion of imperceptible process, Bharata Muni's *rasa* theory and the *dhvani* concept get fused together. Here the primary meaning (*vachyartha*) generally constitutes a configuration of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhichariabhava*

and *rasa* or aesthetic delight is realized not by any words denoting it, but is suggested in the form of the *vyangyartha.* But *rasa* cannot be evoked by simply naming it. For instance if one hears the word *'karuna',* it does not evoke the feeling of pathos in his mind. But, when one listens to the first verse that *adi kavi Valmiki* uttered about the pain of the separation of the pair of *krauncha* birds when one of them is killed by the hunter, the feeling of pathos is at once aroused. Anandavardhna rightly observes that while suggestion of *rasa* is the ultimate end of poetry, idea and figure, *vastu* and *alamkara,* can also be suggested like *rasa.* Establishing the pre-eminence of *rasa,* which according to him is the soul of suggestion, he asks poets to employ *alamkaras* only with the aim of evoking *rasa-dhvani* and not disregarding *rasa.* He considers *rasa-dhvani* as the ultimate goal of poetic creation.

Suggestive Elements

In *Dhvanyaloka*, Anadavardhana points out that while the primary meaning is based upon *shabda* or words only, suggestiveness is related not only to words but also to the sense. Though suggestiveness is not unrelated to verbal functions like *abhidha* or *lakshana*, it transcends them. Thus, while the first two are expressed by direct meanings and are l*aukika dhvani, rasa-dhvani,* which is the highest form of *dhvani*, is inexpressible and can be only experienced. This experience is *alaukika* and not just an ordinary, everyday experience. Linking suggestiveness and feeling, Anandavardhana's doctrine goes beyond verbal construction and can be applied to other areas of art experience, like music and dance, as well.

The word, the letters, the sentence or even the whole composition all can possess suggestive power in a poetic context and help in producing aesthetic relish. Words are composed of letters which though by themselves do not convey sense, can however act in various arrangements as suggesters for expressing meaning and nourishing *rasa*.

Suggestiveness in a poetic construction is not exclusive to words alone. The word, the letters, the sentence or even the whole composition all can possess suggestive power in a poetic context and help in producing aesthetic relish. Words are composed of letters which though by themselves do not convey sense, can however act in various arrangements as suggesters for expressing meaning and nourishing *rasa.* For instance, combinations of soft and pleasant sounding letters are helpful in suggesting *shrinagara* or the erotic *rasa.* Similarly, combination and conjunction of harsh and high sounding letters are of help in *vira rasa* or the heroic sentiment. But if harsh consonants like palatal or cerebral *sha* are used in conjunction with *dha* and *ra*, they become a hindrance in the evocation of the *shringara rasa.* He also says that even letters can be suggestive.. However, when these same letters are employed to describe the feeling of disgust, these will intensify it. Thus, even letters suggest sentiments, *rasa*, as do words, sentences and other elements of a poetic construction.

Poetic genius

In the very beginning in DL, Anandavardhana speaks in glowing terms about poetic genius. The creative genius of great poets, he says, is extraordinary and their speech is suffused with sweet and suggested meanings. Anandavardhana puts only a few -- at the most five or six -- in the category of really great poets -- and these include Kalidasa. The verse is as follows:

"The speech of the first-rate poets streaming forth that sweet content reveals clearly their extraordinary genius, which is as unearthly as it is ever bright".

(DL, I.6).

Anandavardhana uses terms like *swadu*, *aloksamanya*, *sphuranam* and *pratibha* to describe the composition of great poets. From the selection of such vocabulary it is clear that he considers a great poet to be extraordinarily talented and his creation having the qualities of sweetness as well as brightness. The word *sphuranam* denotes a flash of lightening, a sudden awakening. This quality, he explains, cannot be acquired by having mere knowledge of grammar or looking into the lexicon. The basic requisite for a *mahakavi* is creative imagination, the skill to use words which are rich in suggested meaning. In this context, Anadavardhana refers to the concept of *pratyabhijnana*, showing an attempt to incorporate concepts of Kashmir's local philosophical tradition into the aesthetic discourse.

Ananadavardhana cautions that if a word is used erroneously either because of the poet's lack of

education or his lack of genius, it should not be regarded as the *dhvani* even if the secondary meaning is generated. In this manner, Anandavardhana makes it clear that *dhvani* poetry cannot be composed by all and sundry. It requires either creative imagination or constant training of mind and sensibility to compose poetry.

In the fourth *udyot* of DL, most verses are devoted to describe the characteristics of a good poet and the way to maximize aesthetic delight in poetic composition. Some of the relevant verses in this context are reproduced below:

"By a mere touch of even a single variety of suggestion (among the many that have been enumerated), the poet's expression will acquire novelty though it might perhaps embody only a trite idea." **(DL IV.2)**

"Even trite subjects in poetry will put on a new freshness if they get into touch with sentiment just as the same trees appear quite new with the advent of spring." **(DL IV.4)**

"Though several varieties of the suggested-suggester relationship are possible, the poet should be most intent upon one of them in particular, viz., that relating to the delineation of sentiments etc." **(DL IV.5)**

Anandavardhana uses terms like *swadu*, *aloksamanya*, *sphuranam* and *pratibha* to describe the composition of great poets. From the selection of such a vocabulary it is clear that he considers a great poet to be extraordinarily talented and his creation having the qualities of sweetness as well as brightness.

"So long as these varieties of principal and subordinate suggestion are utilized in a work and so long as the poet has the gift of creative imagination (in so utilizing them), there can be no dearth of poetic themes." **(DL IV.6)**

"Infinitude is achieved by the expressed content also even when it remains in its pure and natural state by reason of the considerations of circumstance, place, time, etc." **(DL-IV.7)**

"Like the resources of primordial Nature herself, the infinite possibilities of poetic themes can never be drained off even by a million Brihaspatis composing with all their might simultaneously". **(DL IV.10)**

"There are bound to be plenty of coincidences amongst great minds". **(DL-IV.11ab)**

"But all of them should not be regarded by the wise as being identical (in respect of plagiarism)." **(DL IV.11cd)**

"Coincidence means correspondence with another. It may be like that of a reflected image or like that of a pointed picture or like that of two living persons resembling each other". **(DLIV.12)**

"Even when the already existing elements of poetic themes such as arrangements of letters etc. are utilized, it will certainly not constitute a flaw so long as the poetic theme as a whole is shining with novelty." **(DL IV.15)**

"Though it might speak of being used earlier, a theme can very well be utilized by a good poet. He will never become an object of censure by so doing". **(DL IV 16cd)**

"The Goddess of Speech, Sarasvati, herself will provide desired ideas to a good poet whose mind is averse to borrowing the belongings of another". **(DL IV.17cd)**

Anandavardhana and poetics in contemporary Asia

One finds many affinities between Anandavardhana's theory of *rasa-dhvani* and aesthetic thinking in neighbouring Asian countries, particularly China and Japan. About the same time when Anandavardhana was engaged in bringing about a paradigmatic shift in the thinking about poetry, the Chinese poet-critic Ssu-k'ung T'u (837-908 A.D.) and others were redefining the aesthetic experience of poetry. Ssu-k'ung put forth the view that aesthetic experience in poetry comes from what he called "flavour beyond flavour" and "image beyond image" (H. Frijda and Louise Sundarrajan, 2007). How close is this to the doctrine of "suggestiveness" propounded by Anandavardhana which says that in poetry where suggested meaning gains primacy *rasa* is evoked. The Chinese critics developed and refined the theory of savouring (*pin-wei*) which incorporated various kinds of emotional experiences that are different from the ordinary, everyday emotional response to things. Chinese poets of the time believed in preserving the principle of harmony in their works. It is on grasping what constitutes harmony in a poetic composition that a poet engages himself in the act of searching for harmony. This act is what they called savouring. In this act of savouring,

there is self-reflexive awareness in which the object of emotion is the experience rather than the experienced object. The adept in savoring primarily relishes the delightful taste and not the tasty food, delightful smell and not the smelling flower, delight produced by music and not the delightful music. It is a second-order comprehension and experiencing of aesthetic rapture. One finds echoes (*dhvani*) of a similar idea in the *rasa-dhvani* concept of Anandavardhana, where intuition of a higher order comes into play and one experiences the rasa generated by the suggestiveness in poetry, music or even non-auditory forms of expression. The process of savoring is a self-initiated act and it does not require any mediation or effort. It is direct. The Chinese explained it by saying that the devil can be made to taste his own medicine, but not to savour it unless he is himself inclined to. Thus, savoring cannot be experienced without intention and it requires the art of *zhi* (making distinction) for its fruition. This sounds similar to Anandavardhana's view that only the *sahridaya* and people of refined sensibility can relish *rasa-dhvani* and his exhortation to poets to write *dhvani*-poetry.

One finds many affinities between Anandavardhana's theory of *rasa-dhvani* and aesthetic thinking in neighbouring Asian countries, particularly China and Japan. About the same time when Anandavardhana was engaged in bringing about a paradigmatic shift in the thinking about poetry, the Chinese poet-critic Ssu-k'ung T'u (837-908 A.D.) and others were redefining the aesthetic experience of poetry.

In the concept of savouring, the contemporary Chinese scholars formulated various stages and classified the process systemically. *P'in-wei* is the distinction of flavor, *zhi-wei* is the cognition of flavour and *hui wei* is the memory of flavour. Then there is *yi-wei* or flavour corresponding to the conception of *rasa-dhvani* in entirety. Su-kung T'u is said to have savoured 24 poetic moods. The act of savouring involves lingering over sensory and non-sensory impressions. It is like the echo of the *dhvani* theory. One casts a glance, turns away and casts a new glance again. This produces delight. One finds same example put forth to argue about suggestiveness in poetic composition by Anandavardhana in *Dhvanyaloka*. When savouring is done of meaning of events or any object, insights is produced which is different than what the perceived object signified. This insight is inexpressible and non-communicable just like *rasa-dhvani*. Ssu-K'ung T'u writes:

"An image beyond the image, a scene beyond the scene -- can these be easily verbalized?"

This is again very close to the concept of suggestiveness. Savoring produces pleasure and the feeling of harmony between things which enters one's consciousness. Resonance (*dhvani*) of the idea can be found in a beautiful verse of Ssu-K'ung T'u:

"As if just about to echo;
Those who recognize already understand;
But seek it and it will move further away."

In Japan, there was a tradition of "miraculous" poetry, *kotodama* (magic spirit, power of special word). A contemporary of Anandavardhana, the Japanese court poet Kino Tsurayuki (905A.D.) compiled an anthology of poems, *Kokin Wakashu* (Collections of Poems, Past and Present) and stated in the introduction that the poetry has the power to "move heaven and earth, stir feeling in unseen demons and gods, soften relations between men and women, and soothe the hearts of fierce warriors". This is like the resonance of *rasa-dhvani*, the extraordinary effect that suggestiveness can induce in poetry by evoking an emotive response transcending ordinary experience. The Japanese tradition abounds in the stories of poets who used poetry to heal people, inspire love, end droughts, exorcise demons and even bring back dead to life. Such tales are called *kakotu setsuwa*. It is this early tradition which later became a powerful trend with the advent of *waka* poetry. *Waka* is a five-line verse of 31 syllables and is believed to have miraculous powers. But, *waka*, from which other variants like the *haiku* emerged, has its roots in the works of Kukai Kobo Daishi (774–835). Kobo Daishi had a lasting influence on the development of subsequent Japanese poetry and poetics. For him, writing was a sacred technology necessary for creating and maintaining the cosmic order. All literature is a manifestation of the Buddha's universe. It is like the *shabda- brahma* of Bhartrihari's *sphota* doctrine. Kobo fused poetry and mantra together and turned poetry into a means of achieving enlightenment.

Kobo introduced the idea of combining the exoteric and the esoteric in poetry, propounding that a poem has a subtle and deeper meaning below the surface meaning. The reader has to go beyond the surface meaning and delve deeper to arrive at the real meaning.. This bears a similarity to Anandavardhana's idea of *dhvani* or the

suggested meaning transcending the literal or figurative meaning. According to Kobo, Tathagata knows the true meaning while lay persons straddling the *samsara* know only the outer characteristics of the word and not the inner meaning.

One is amazed at the similarity between the ideas about poetry and poetic creativity of these three contemporary geniuses -- Anandavardhana, Kukai Kobo Daishi and Ssu-k'ung T'u. Their poetic theories appeared in similar times in different corners of Asia and the Asian literary scene did not remain the same after that. In fact the radical revaluation of poetic language across Asia had its roots in the new doctrines that burst forth during the ninth century with implications for cultural and intellectual enterprises later in time. Perhaps that is why the *ulatbansi* verses of Kabir and the poetry of Japanese zen poets bear such a similarity with each other. Was this an epistemological resonance which echoed in Asian thinking related to different areas of logo-centric as well as non-logo-centric creativity?

Why did this Asian poetic thinking, this simultaneous creative urge to link aesthetic delight, language, gesture, silence, non-verbal sounds, meaning, intuition and the ultimate reality together remain esoteric to generations of Asians? Why did it succumb to western calculative, utilitarian thinking within a few centuries after poetries acquired the miraculous power to transform the visible as well as the invisible universe?

One of the towering western philosophers, Martin Heidegger, encountered Indian thought and proclaimed the need for a planetary thinking based upon "poetic dwelling"! Heidegger was aghast at the march of western calculative thinking and the associated technicity that has uprooted man from the earth. He stated that the only possibility to save ourselves is by thinking and poetizing. Pointing to the nature of new poetic thinking, Heidegger characterized it as that which strives to ponder over the un-thought. The essence of poetry is to "point to something" "we cannot see", he said. And perhaps this "pointing to something" is what Anadavardhana termed as *dhvani*. Sadly today in Kashmir, to which he belonged, this tradition of poetic thinking is lost due to political turbulence. To save the planet is to save ourselves. The path is within our grasp. The tradition of poetic thinking to which Anandavardhana contributed so richly has to be revived.

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दर्शन

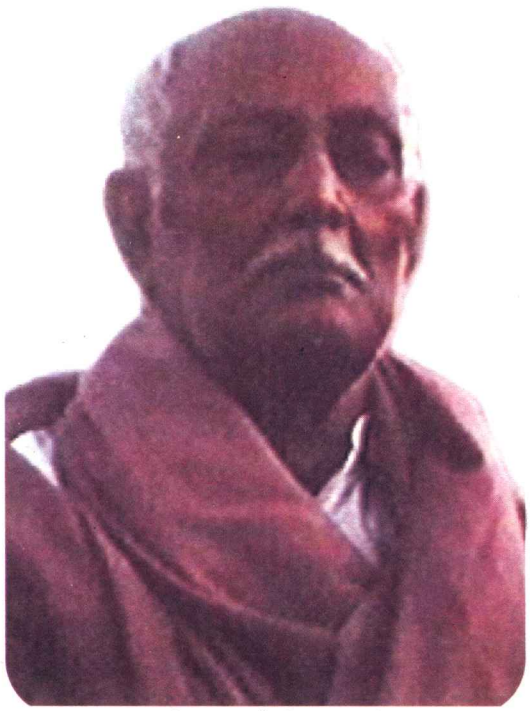
महामहोपाध्याय डॉ. गोपीनाथ कविराज और काश्मीरीय शैव-दर्शन

गीतिका काव खेर

कुछ समय पहले मुझे महामहोपाध्याय डॉ. गोपीनाथ जी का बहुचर्चित ग्रंथ 'भारतीय संस्कृति और साधना' पढ़ने का अवसर मिला। इस ग्रंथ में उन्होंने अपने निबंधों द्वारा भारतीय संस्कृति से जुड़े हुए गूढ़ और रहस्यपूर्ण तत्वों की व्याख्या की है। इसी संकलन में 'काश्मीरीय शैव दर्शन' पर भी एक लेख लिखा गया है, जिसके कुछ महत्वपूर्ण अंश मैं आपके समक्ष प्रस्तुत करने जा रही हूं।

कविराज गोपीनाथ जी के अनुसार प्रत्यभिज्ञा दर्शन भारतीय विचार साम्राज्य की एक अति प्राचीन और दुर्लभ सम्पदा है और इसे मात्र त्रिकदर्शन का ही नहीं, पूरे शैवागम का भी सारभूत रस–स्वरूप कहा गया है।

आगमों में द्वेत, द्वैताद्वैत और अद्वैत सभी प्रकार के दार्शनिक वादों के मूलसूत्र देखे जाते हैं। 'स्वच्छंदतंत्र', 'मालिनीविजय तंत्र' जैसे अनेक तंत्रों और तैत्तिरीय संहिता जैसे वैदिक ग्रंथों का मंथन करके कश्मीरी शैवों ने एक नये दर्शन का प्रतिपादन किया।



कविराज गोपीनाथ जी

उत्पलदेव, वसुगुप्त और अभिनवगुप्त जैसे आचार्यों ने अद्वैतवाद को ही ग्रहण किया तथा इस वाद का महात्म्य दिखलाने के लिए अनेकों ग्रंथ और टीकाएं रचीं। इन आचार्यों ने अनेक प्रकार से तर्क–वितर्क करके एक नवीन दार्शनिक प्रणाली विकसित की जिसे एक आम गृहस्थ जीवन व्यतीत करने वाला व्यक्ति भी समझकर पालन कर सके।

वेदांत और त्रिकदर्शन में भेद–आचार्य गौडपाद और शंकराचार्य द्वारा प्रचारित अद्वैतवाद तथा त्रिकदर्शन के परमेश्वराद्वपवाद में कुछ भिन्नताएं हैं। दोनों के बीच का महत्वपूर्ण अंतर समझाते हुए कविराज गोपीनाथ जी कहते हैं कि दोनो ही माया में विश्वास रखते हैं, परंतु जहां वेदांत में माया को मिथ्या माना गया है और तुच्छ समझकर त्यागने को कहा गया है, वहां त्रिकदर्शन में माया को परमात्मा की स्वतंत्र शक्ति का रूप माना गया है। जिस प्रकार एक अभिनेता भिन्न–भिन्न प्रकार का अभिनय करता है, उसी प्रकार परमात्मा भी अपनी इच्छानुसार भिन्न–भिन्न रूप धारण करते हैं।

वेदांत के अनुसार आत्मा में कर्तृत्व नहीं है, परन्तु त्रिकदर्शन में विमर्श ही आत्मा का स्वभाव है। अतः ज्ञान और क्रिया अलग नहीं एक ही हैं।

चूंकि वेदांत में माया को सत्य नहीं माना जाता उनका अद्वैतभाव व्यावृत्तिमूलक (exclusive) और संन्यासमूलक (based on renunciation and elimination) है। इसमें एक आम गृहस्थ के लिए कोई जगह नहीं। दूसरी तरफ त्रिकदर्शन में शक्ति को सत्य माना गया है। इसलिए जीव और जगत भी सत्य है, मिथ्या नहीं, इसलिए सभी वस्तुतः शिवमय है।

स्पन्दशास्त्रकारों का कहना है–

इति वा वस्य संवितिः क्रीडात्वेनाखिलं जगत।
स पश्यन सततं युक्तो जीवन्मुक्तो न संशयः।।
अर्थात्– जीवनमुक्त जगतमेर को ही आत्मक्रीडा, आत्मशक्ति के विलास रूप में देखते हैं। उनकी योगावस्था कभी भग्न नहीं होती।

ज्ञान और भक्ति का सामंजस्यः त्रिकदर्शन में विशेषता यह है कि न तो यह श्शुष्क ज्ञानमार्ग है न ही ज्ञानहीन भक्तिमार्ग। जहां वेदांत में भक्ति को द्वैतमूलक माना गया है वहां त्रिकदर्शन में ज्ञान के साथ भक्ति के महत्व को भी समझा गया है। त्रिकदर्शन से चिदांश (शिवभाव) ज्ञानभाव है और आनन्दांश, शक्तिभाव, भक्तिभाव। पूरे शैवागम और शक्तिआगम में दास्यात्मक भक्ति स्वीकार की गई है। त्रिकदर्शन की भक्ति अज्ञानमूलक द्वैतभाव (blindfaith) से उत्पन्न नहीं हुई है। इसमें ज्ञान और भक्ति का, शिव और शक्ति का सामंजस्य है।
भक्ति को रस के साथ जोड़कर इसे एक अलौकिक (other wordly) रुतबा देने का प्रतत्न किया गया है। 'रस' का महत्व इससे ज्ञात होता है कि भरतमुनि द्वारा रचित नाट्यशास्त्र के 'रस–सूत्र' की टीका अभिनवभारती में अभिनवगुप्त ने बड़े–बड़े कश्मीरी शैव विद्वानों के रससूत्र पर मतों को प्रस्तुत किया है। यह अपने आप इस बात को दर्शाता है कि रस, कला आस्वादन सिर्फ भोग की नज़र से नहीं देखा जाता था। इसमें एक अलौकिक (other world aspect) की भी झलक मिलती है।

भरतमुनि द्वारा दिए गए आठ रसों में नौवां 'शांत रस' जोड़कर आचार्य अभिनवगुप्त रसतत्व को एक नई ऊंचाई पर ले गए। त्रिकदर्शन के आचार्यों ने भक्ति को रस के रूप में स्वीकार कर अध्यात्म–क्षेत्र के एक गंभीर तत्व को प्रकट किया है।

यहां मैं कहना चाहूंगी जो विद्वान या कला के छात्र अथवा समीक्षक भारती सौंदर्यशास्त्र का सरसरी रूप से अध्ययन करने का प्रयत्न करते हैं और बीच में यह कह कर छोड़ देते हैं कि यह आज के युग के लिए सार्थक है, पुनः सोचें और ज़्यादा गहराई से तथ्य को समझने का प्रयत्न करें क्योंकि यहां से भारतीय संस्कृति और विचारधारा को समझने की पहल की जा सकती है।

भरतमुनि द्वारा दिए गए आठ रसों में नौवां 'शांत रस' जोड़कर आचार्य अभिनवगुप्त रसतत्व को एक नई ऊंचाई पर ले गए। त्रिकदर्शन के आचार्यों ने भक्ति को रस के रूप में स्वीकार कर अध्यात्म–क्षेत्र के एक गंभीर तत्व को प्रकट किया है। उत्पलाचार्य अपनी शिवस्तोत्रावली के प्रथम स्तोत्र (पांचवां श्लोक) में कहते हैं–

जयन्ति भक्तिपीयूषरसासववरोन्मदाः
अद्वितीया अपि सदा।
त्वदद्वितीया अपि प्रभौ।।

अनव्यः
(1) भक्ति+पीयूष+रस – (अमृत)
= भक्ति का अमृतरूपी रस

(2) आसव = मदिरा
वर = उच्च कोटि
उन्मदा = गतवाला हुआ
अद्वितीया =जिसका कोई जोड़ न हो
अपि = भी
त्वद+द्वितीया = आप को जोड़ा
ज्यन्ति = उनकी जयजयकार हो
अर्थात्:–

हे प्रभो जो भक्तजन तुम्हारी भक्ति के अमृतरूपी रस का पान करके उच्च कोटि की मदिरा का पान करने वाले मतवाले मनुष्य की तरह मस्त हो जाते हैं वे भक्तजन अद्वितीय (उनका कोई जोड़ नहीं है) बनकर भी तुम्हारे जैसे होते हैं, शिव बन जाते हैं। उन भक्तजनों की जयजयकार हो।
आचार्य क्षेमराज ने इस श्लोक पर टीका करते हुए समझाया है कि केवल इन्ही भक्तजनों का जीवन ही सार्थक है और केवल यही लोग भक्ति के इस अद्वैत भाव को समझ सकते हैं जहां साधारण दृष्टि से द्वैतभाव का आभास होता है।
त्रिकदर्शन की चर्चा और व्याख्या तो कभी समाप्त न हो ऐसी है। आशा करती हूं कि यह लेख पाठकों के मन में अपनी इस अनमोल धरोहर को और गइराई से जानने की जिज्ञासा उत्पन्न कर सकेगा।

कविता

यहाँ उपस्थित है ईश्वर

डॉ॰ शशि शेखर तोषखानी

(संत–कवि कृष्णजू राज़दान के प्रति)

यह आस्था की भूमि है–
पसलियों के घाव से लेकर
प्रार्थनाओं के आकाश तक का भूगोल
आज जब गिरवी रख दिये हैं हमने
अपने सारे सितारे
आज जब लुढ़क रहे हैं
पवित्र ग्रथों में अपने–अपने स्थाान से
पूर्वजों के कपाल
आज जब कर दिया गया है
हमें इतिहास से बाहर
हमारे पास बचा है
यही इतना ही भूगोल
पीड़ा का यह धरातल!

यहीं कहीं मिलती हैं हमें लल्लेश्वरी
अपने किसी वाक् की खिड़की से झांकती हुई
और हमारे रक्त में खिल उठता है
हज़ार पंखुड़ियों का कमल
यहीं कहीं दिखाई देते हो तुम–
कृष्ण जू राज़दान
और हमारी देह की शिरा–शिरा में
झनझना उठता है ओमकार!
बहा ले जाता है हमें
तुम्हारे कंठ में लहराता हुआ गीतों का समुद्र
अपने उद्दाम ज्वार के साथ
तरंग–तरंग पर उठता–गिरता
बहता–तिरता है
हमारा मछली–मन

पहाड़ी की ऊँची चोटी पर खड़े
मंदिर की घंटियों की तरह
बजता है हमारे भीतर अतीत
जिसकी सीढ़ियों पर छोड़ आये हो तुम
अपनी खड़ाऊँ
कृष्ण जू राज़दान!
आँधियों और अंधेरों
और रक्त की वर्षा के बीच
भटकते–भागते हुए हम

जब देते हैं तुम्हारे शब्दों के द्वार पर दस्तक
तो उसके पीछे खड़ा मिलता है हमें ईश्वर
घास की नोकों पर ओस की अनगिनत बूँदों की तरह
उतर आती है हम पर
उसकी मौन करुणा
नंदन–वन के चंदन तरुओं के नीचे बैठे ऋषि
हमारे दुख को एक ऋचा की तरह गाते हैं
राधा और कृष्ण की चिरंतन रास लीला के लिए
मन बन जाता है वृंदावन
हमारी हड्डियों के मौन में सुनाई देता है
शिव और शक्ति का अनंत संवाद
तुम्हारी पंक्तियों से झरते
रहस्यमय नीले प्रकाश में
डबडबाई आँख–सा खुलता है
हमारे होने का अर्थ!

यह आस्था की भूमि है–
संभावनाओं का भूगोल
मैना की चोंच से गिरा
एक छोटा–सा कंकड़
यहाँ पहाड़ बन सकता है
दैत्य की पीठ को कुचलता हुआ
आषाढ़ की आग
माघ की बर्फ में बदल सकती है
आततायी के अहंकार की चिंदियाँ उड़ाते हुए
और रूंधे कंठों से फूट सकते हैं
पूजा के रुके हुए बोल

यह आस्था की भूमि है–
तुम्हारे स्वर में वास करती हुई
एक पूरी संस्कृति
यहाँ सहस्रधारा बनकर
बह रही है हृदय–हृदय में
कृष्ण जू राज़दान!

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बी एच ई एल
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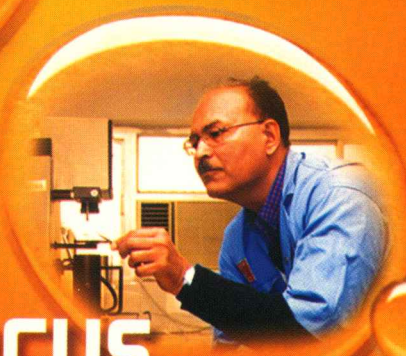

FOCUS

Attributes that create landmarks of success.

We at ONGC are ensuring that our nation soars high with pride. Our illustrious journey is punctuated with many accomplishments and incredible feats. As per Platts Top 250 ranking in 2010, ONGC is the No. 1 Exploration & Production company in the world. As a matter of fact, the Maharatna PSU produces 1.24 Million Barrels of Oil Equivalent every day. With time, the company has also harnessed alternate sources of energy. No wonder, our committed endeavours are energizing the nation in more ways than one.

ओएनजीसी

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